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### The Real Presence in the Lord's Supper A Comparative Study of Hermann Sasse, Leiv Aalen, and Tom Hardt

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THE REAL PRÉSENCE IN THE LORD'S SUPPER  
A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF  
HERMANN SASSE, LEIV AALEN, AND TOM HARDT

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A Thesis Presented to the Faculty  
of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis,  
Department of Systematic Theology  
in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of  
Master of Sacred Theology

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by  
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May 1975

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SHORT TITLE

REAL PRESENCE IN SASSE, AALEN, AND HARDT: Geir Hoaas, S.T.M.; May 1975

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Our objective is to portray the Real Presence under three aspects, namely Christology, Salvation for the individual, and the Function in the Church. As such it is a systematic endeavor to clarify the relation of the Real Presence to each of these areas. The two latter are necessarily dependent on the first. However, we are also limited in a historical sense, in that our study is primarily an analysis of these three relations as presented by the theologians we are investigating, Hermann Sasse, Leiv Aalen, and Tom Hardt. We do not, therefore, intend to give an independent and original contribution to the study of Luther or Lutheranism on the Real Presence in the Lord's Supper. Nevertheless, Sasse, Aalen, and Hardt may all be characterized as conservative, confessional Lutherans, and therefore our survey may also contribute to an understanding of Lutheranism.

Our choice of the three theologians is prompted both by their mutual doctrinal affinity and indebtedness, and also because of their national background, Aalen and Hardt both being Scandinavians.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Aalen proudly refers to Sasse as his teacher, who more than anyone else influenced his confessional consciousness. He has translated into Norwegian several of Sasse's writings, most prominent *Hvad er luthersk kristendom*, 1937 of Sasse's *Was heisst lutherisch?*, 1936. Hardt designated his doctrinal work of 1971 to Sasse, showing his indebtedness and appreciation. Of the two Scandinavians, Hardt is personally unknown to the present writer.



As we have chosen to present our material from a thematic point of view, rather than giving completely independent treatments of the three theologians, we will here give brief biographical and characterizing sketches of each one.

### Sasse

Hermann Sasse studied in Berlin under K. Holl and A. Harnack, and took his Licentiat degree with A. Deissmann. In 1927, at the age of thirty-two, Sasse seems to mark himself as a confessional Lutheran. That year he was German delegate to Lausanne at the World Conference of Faith and Order. He holds that it was the "experience in the ecumenical work . . . [that] made me a confessional Lutheran."<sup>2</sup> He was called to a theological chair at the University of Erlangen in 1933 and played an active part in the Kirchenkampf. During his sixteen years in Erlangen he produced some of his most notable works. He was one of the founders of Beken nende Kirche and prepared its first doctrinal statement, the Bethel Confession. To his sorrow he saw the movement being overtaken by Karl Barth, whom he fought intensely, especially by opposing the Barmen-Declaration because of its confessional character. Even though himself an active anti-Nazi,<sup>3</sup> he admitted with great sadness that Lutheran theologians in particular opened the door through Deutsche Christen for the National Socialist Party to get a hold in the evangelical churches of Germany

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<sup>2</sup>Quoted from K. Runia, "Dr. Hermann Sasse 'In Statu Confessionis,'" Reformed Theological Review XXVII (1968), 1.

<sup>3</sup>Strong rejection of the Führer-idea, especially in Vom Sinn des Staates (Berlin: Verlag Edwin Runge, 1932).



After World War II he wrote a new constitution for German Protestantism, where the proposed Council of Evangelical Churches of Germany would not function as a church, but merely as the name indicates, a council including the United Lutheran Church, the Reformed Church, and the United Church, each having its own church government. However, under the influence of Barth this resulted in the one United Evangelical Church in 1948. Sasse then left the Church of Bavaria and joined the Lutheran Free Church. However, since there was no teaching position available for him there, he emigrated to Australia in 1949, accepting a call to join the Faculty of Immanuel College, Adelaide, of the United Evangelical Church of Australia. After the merger with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in 1967 into the Lutheran Church of Australia, a similar merger of their seminaries, strongly urged by Sasse, took place, resulting in Lutheran Seminary.

Through his "Letters to Lutheran Pastors," which have appeared since 1948, he has given leadership to Lutheran churches in Germany as well as in Scandinavia and the United States. His position throughout seems to have been one of uncompromising loyalty to the Lutheran Confessions. Yet the Reformed theologian, Klaas Runia, both friend and critic of Sasse, holds that a certain change has taken place in Sasse's attitude both toward the Reformed and the Catholics, from polemics to dialogue.<sup>4</sup> After Vatican II, Sasse may even hold that "Rome is on the road to a reformation," this because of the discovery of the Bible. For Sasse there will always be a "tension between separation and brotherhood," because one cannot be indifferent to what happens to other Christians. Yet, in all discussions

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<sup>4</sup>Runia, XXVII, 8-10; cf. Hermann Sasse, In Statu Confessionis (Berlin: Lutherisches Verlagshaus, c. 1966), pp. 211, 234, 236.



there is one norm: secundum sacram Scripturam. The concept of heresy will therefore always exist, because "there is a profound difference in the apprehension of Holy Scriptures behind the differences over the doctrine of the Lord's Supper."<sup>5</sup> Therefore Luther's struggle for the Gospel is in essence identical with that of the Real Presence, characterized as the "Shibboleth of Division" among Christians. The decisions of our Fathers of the sixteenth century were not meant to be timebound and relative, but expositions of eternal truths.

#### Aalen

Leiv Aalen has for almost thirty years contributed to the theological profile of Menighetsfakultetet in Oslo, or in English, The Free Faculty of Theology. After graduating from that seminary in 1935, he spent a few of the following years studying in Tübingen and Erlangen, where he met Sasse. His doctoral work was on the theology of the young Nikolaus L. von Zinzendorf, published seven years after being appointed as associate professor at Menighetsfakultetet in 1945.<sup>6</sup> As professor in Systematics from 1957, Aalen has become known as a strict confessional Lutheran, making front both to right and left, yet open to dialogue between the confessions. His main historical contribution has in later years been the analysis of newer protestantism, with its roots back to pietism and rationalism.

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<sup>5</sup>Hermann Sasse, Here We Stand (New York: Harper & Brothers, c.1938), p. 150. See also Vom Sakrament des Altars (Leipzig: Verlag Dorffling und Franke, 1941), pp. 80-81, 134-135.

<sup>6</sup>His first major work: Testimonium Spiritus Sancti som teologisk "prinsipp" (Oslo: Lutherstiftelsens Forlag, 1938).



Holding that these influences, often labeled together, also have crept into the Lutheran churches, he has taken pains to clarify the doctrinal issues.

Within confessional Lutheran theology, Aalen has perhaps been most concerned with rehabilitating, or defending, what to him is the Lutheran position on Baptism.

In reaction to modern Luther-scholarship, which tends to canonize the young Luther, Aalen stresses very strongly that when we discuss Lutheranism our primary concern is neither Luther's nor Melanchthon's theology, but that of the Lutheran Confessions.<sup>7</sup> Aalen's concern in his immediate theological environment is to defend the objectivity of the sacraments as means of grace. The Real Presence is also for him a crucial point for the correct understanding of the Lord's Supper, as well as the Gospel itself.

Aalen's work is distinguished from the two others by referring to today's ecumenical situation, rather than giving an historical analysis of the reformation. The two front situation of Lutheranism in our topic is his main concern.

#### Hardt

Our third contributor, Tom Hardt, is the youngest and least known of the three. His doctoral thesis Venerabilis & Adorabilis Eucharistia of 1971 was delivered while being pastor in the independent Lutheran St. Martin's congregation in Stockholm, where he is currently. He has served

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<sup>7</sup>Leiv Aalen, Ord og Sakrament (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1966), p. 64, referring to similar view of W. Elert.



there since 1961 when the congregation was founded. His work stands in close connection with the life of his congregation where the mass is conducted with elevation and liturgical grandeur and the Baptism with exorcism.

His thesis was received with great admiration for the enormous work and knowledge it displays, but also with reservation because of its "Gnesio-Lutheran" character, a label set on him by a fellow conservative.<sup>8</sup> From confessional Lutherans consternation has been expressed over the fact that a scholar like Hardt has not been called to the Theological Faculty of Stockholm, at least as guest-lecturer, while both Baptists and Roman Catholics seem to have free access.

An abbreviation and excerpt of the thesis, somewhat rearranged and supplemented, was made available for lay people. A second part to his present work is promised, which will treat more specifically the Lord's Supper from the viewpoint of the means of grace. We therefore realize that the present material in fact is insufficient to cover Hardt's complete stand on our topic. Nevertheless we may assert that his future work will not compromise with the present documentations, and that they therefore give accurate accounts, though inadequate on certain points.

Hardt's main thesis is that the Lutheran Reformation conceived of the presence of the body and blood of Christ in the sacrament in a very concrete manner. The Lutheran Mass acknowledges the miracle effected by the words of institution. The Christology is that of the early Church, revived

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<sup>8</sup>G. A. Danell, in a recension on Hardt's small book Om Altarets Sakrament, in Nya Vaktaren (September 1973), pp. 124-125.



in the Reformation. Thus adoration, elevation, and complete sumption of the elements are, according to Hardt, necessary results of the Lutheran Real Presence.

### Summary

The three contributors thus may seem to have somewhat differing aims with their theological works. Yet, the Real Presence is a focal point in the sacramental theology of the Lord's Supper and of the Gospel in general for all three.

We will treat them in the order of our introduction under each heading, regarding Sasse's part as basic, wherefore similar treatments of the other two will not be repeated. We will endeavor to bring forth the uniqueness of each one.

Quotations in English from Aalen and Hardt are translations by the present writer. This applies also to Luther quotations. German Luther quotations are from the Weimaran, <sup>9</sup> to which all Luther material is referred.

The Lutheran Confessions are referred to according to Bekenntnis-Schriften of 1930, the English texts being from the Philadelphia edition of the Book of Concord.<sup>10</sup>

Bible texts are from the Revised Standard Version.

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<sup>9</sup>D. Martin Luther's Werke. Kritische Gesamtausgabe, 58 vols. (Weimar: Hermann Böhlau, 1883), hereinafter referred to as WA; Briefwechsel, 14 vols., hereinafter referred to as WA Br; Tischreden, 6 vols., hereinafter referred to as WA TR.

<sup>10</sup>Die Bekenntnisschriften der evangelisch-lutherischen Kirche. (1930 edition; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1967). The Book of Concord. The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, translated and edited by Theodore G. Tappert (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, c. 1959).



## CHAPTER II

### THE CHRISTOLOGY OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

#### Theology of Incarnation

Sasse

While Hermann Sasse maintains that the sacrament is primarily something to be celebrated, and not to be speculated on, he goes to considerable pains to show its foundation in the Christology of the early Church:

no theologian of the Ancient Church ever doubted that, according to the words of institution, the consecrated bread is the body and the consecrated wine is the blood of Christ.<sup>1</sup>

Although there existed different theological theories, the doctrine was safeguarded in the liturgy, making an explicit dogma unnecessary.

The dogma of the Real Presence was firmly and formally established in 1079 with the papal declaration Ego Berengarius, where Gregory VII forced Berengar, who had advocated a rational and symbolic concept of the Real Presence rejecting the miracle, to take back his "errors" and confess the doctrine of the Church. In 1215 under the IVth Lateran Council, the transubstantiation was formally established by the decree Caput Firmiter. The Council of Constance in 1415 dogmatized sub una, thus giving the final dogmatic background for the Reformation. In the Middle Ages two sacraments occupied the center of attention, namely Penance and

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<sup>1</sup>H. Sasse, This is my Body (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, c. 1959), p. 13.



the Sacrament of the Altar. "No medieval Christian could live without receiving sacramental absolution."<sup>2</sup>

The Christological aspect of the Eucharistic dispute in the Reformation, is clearest brought forth in Luther's controversy with Zwingli, climaxing at the Marburg Colloquy in 1529. Sasse in This is My Body goes to great length to clarify the positions and presents lengthy excerpts of the colloquy itself.<sup>3</sup>

"Luther's understanding of Christ makes the Lord's Supper a miracle."<sup>4</sup> Sasse maintains this as a key to Luther's seemingly lack of intellectual difficulty with accepting the Real Presence. Zwingli would also accept the Biblical miracles, but they were "seen" miracles, he contends. Luther held that this was not the case with many of God's greatest miracles, for example, the incarnation, which also remains in the sphere of the invisible. Zwingli nevertheless cannot give up the axiom that a body cannot be in more than one place at the same time. God does not act outside or beyond logic. Christ is today, as he has been after the ascension, at the right hand of the Father, therefore he cannot be bodily present here on earth.

Luther's reply may be summarized in three main points. First, he stresses that "the right hand of God is everywhere,"<sup>5</sup> therefore Christ is

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<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 17.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., pp. 187-294, Chapter V: Marburg Colloquy.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 154.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 156, referring to D. Martin Luther's Werke, Kritische Gesamtausgabe (Weimar: Hermann Böhlau, 1883) XXVI, 326 "das Gottes rechte hand allenthalben ist." Hereafter referred to as WA. Luther did not coin the noun ubiquitas as a doctrinal slogan.



not limited to a certain place in heaven. This assertion, according to Sasse, "overthrows the entire view of the medieval science and theology,"<sup>6</sup> and opens up the possibility of the Real Presence of Christ's body also in the Eucharist. The Real Presence is therefore not nonsensical. To Zwingli's objection that Christ then would be found everywhere, in all parts of creation, Luther held that Christ has promised that He will be found in the Sacrament, and the "for you" is here what matters. "The right hand of God is the almighty power of God which at the same time can be nowhere and yet must be everywhere."<sup>7</sup> Sasse maintains that Luther here is giving theological, and not philosophical reasons for Christ's bodily presence in the Supper. "It is therefore a grave misunderstanding if the 'ubiquity' sometimes has been interpreted as a sort of pantheism."<sup>8</sup> Christ shares God's mysterious way of presence, also according to his human nature.

Secondly, turning to a philosophical figure of speech, Luther observed that also in philosophy one recognizes other modes of presence than the local or circumscriptive. Luther here inherited William of Ockham's thinking, which in turn was based on that of Thomas Aquinas. There is a presence which is not bound to space, the so-called definitive presence.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 159.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., p. 156, quoting WA XXIII, 133.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid.; cf. infra, pp. 21, 23, 46.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid. Thomas spoke of a praesentia localis sive circumscriptiva, and a praesentia diffinitiva, which he applied to the host, where Christ's body was illocally present. Ockham used the term esse diffinitive, of the non-spatial presence, and a third mode of presence esse repletive of God's omnipresence, also non-spatially defined. He tentatively suggested that Christ's body comes under this one.



The essence of this argumentation is that there is an illocal, incomprehensible, spiritual presence, which is that of Christ's glorified body. According to this presence He neither occupies nor vacates space, but penetrates all creation wherever He pleases. This is a part of incarnation theology. "The glorification of Jesus Christ began, according to Lutheran doctrine, not with His resurrection and exaltation, but already with His incarnation."<sup>10</sup>

Thirdly, the binding truth in this controversy is not the philosophical argumentation, but the four following chief principles of Luther, adopted by the Formula of Concord:

(1) Jesus Christ is essential, natural, true and perfect God and man in one person, inseparable and undivided. (2) God's right hand is everywhere. (3) God's Word is not false, nor does it lie. (4) God has and recognizes many modes of being in any place and not only the single one concerning which the fanatics talk flippantly, and which philosophers call localem or local.<sup>11</sup>

Sasse calls to our attention that sentence (1) focuses everything upon a right Christological perception, the incarnation being a change in the eternal son's being. The infinite one has actually "come down into" the finite.<sup>12</sup> Luther

knew and honored no other God than the one who became man. And this God is present in the Sacrament just as

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<sup>10</sup>Ibid., p. 158.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., p. 159-160, taken from WA XXVI, 326, quoted also in Solida Declaratio VII, 94-97, Die Bekenntnisschriften der evangelisch-lutherischen Kirche (1930 edition; Göttingen: Vanderhoeck & Ruprecht, 1967), 1006. Hereafter referred to as BS.

<sup>12</sup>Calvin's "finitum non capax infiniti" is thus challenged and rejected.



substantially as He was born of the Virgin. Apart from Him there is no God who can save us.<sup>13</sup>

Luther's insistence on the Deus Revelatus, that is Deus Incarnatus, as our object of concern, comes forth clearly in his argumentation with Oecolampadius at Marburg:

Oecolampadius: You should not cling to the humanity and the flesh of Christ, but rather lift up your mind to His divinity.

Luther: I do not know of any God except Him who was made flesh, nor do I want to have another. And there is no other God who could save us, besides the God Incarnate. Therefore we shall not suffer His humanity to be underestimated or neglected.<sup>14</sup>

Zwingli would not be rebuffed by Luther for not holding to a sacramental presence of the body of Christ, but he explains it as repraesentative, which Sasse explains to mean that Christ is mentally present to the believing communicant.<sup>15</sup> Zwingli held the possibility that God in the Supper could work the miracle of a bodily existence in more than one place at the same time, as a consequence of Christ's omnipresence. Yet he held this to be contrary to practice, and accused Luther of local assumptions.

Luther's final answers to this dispute may be summarized by the following statements:

I have nothing whatever to do with mathematical reasons and . . . I exclude and reject completely from the words

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<sup>13</sup>H. Sasse, Here We Stand (New York: Harper & Brothers, c.1938), p. 146, referring to WA I, 362: "Ergo in Christo crucifixo est vera Theologia et cognitio Dei."

<sup>14</sup>Sasse, This is, pp. 252-253. The Colloquy is reconstructed on the basis of the texts in the Weimar edition, WA XXX, iii, 92-171, and W. Koehler, Das Marburger Religionsgespräch 1529, Versuch einer Rekonstruktion (Leipzig: Mittensius Nachfolger, 1929).

<sup>15</sup>Sasse, This is, p. 256.



of the Lord's Supper the adverb of space. The words are: "This is my body," not: "There is my body." Whether it is locally or not locally, I do not want to know.<sup>16</sup>

Appealing to Scripture Luther continues:

The words "This is my body" prove that the body of Christ can be in many places simultaneously. For these words prove the presence of the body in the bread. . . . I leave it to God whether or not the body of Christ is in a place ("in loco"). For me this is enough: "This is my body."<sup>17</sup>

Melanchthon chose rather to speak of Christ's power to be many places simultaneously if He so willed, deducing the Real Presence from His will rather than from His omnipresence. However, he did not advocate a mere possible presence, but a real praesentia corporis.<sup>18</sup> His attitude was evidently prompted by his fear of a misunderstanding of Luther, leading to a concrete, local perception of the Body, ultimately leading to what Melanchthon found highly disgusting, namely the so-called "bread-worship." Sasse holds there is no doctrinal difference here between the two Reformers, but that they differed on the metaphysical question of how the unspatial presence of the body and blood of Christ can exist in spatial categories.

To the question of dogmatizing the ubiquitas, Sasse holds that Luther himself did not demand an acceptance of it.<sup>19</sup> He further points out how

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<sup>16</sup>Ibid., p. 257.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., pp. 260-261.

<sup>18</sup>The technical term multivolopraesentia, as distinguished from ubiquitas, originates from Sol. Decl. VIII, 79, BS 1044, the verb velle is used of Christ's ability. Cf. Sasse, Vom Sakraments des Altars (Leipzig: Verlag Dorffling & Franke, 1941), p. 143, referring to Corpus Reformatorum, Philippi Melanchthons Opera Quae supersunt omnia, edited by C. G. Bretschneider (Halis Saxonum: C. S. Schwetsche et filium, 1834), II, 225. Hereafter referred to as CR.

<sup>19</sup>Sasse, This is, p. 341. Cf. R. Prenter, Skabelse og Genløsning (Copenhagen: G. E. C. Gads Forlag, c.1967), p. 549, who holds that the doctrine of the ubiquity protected the main issue, that the body given is also the crucified one.



later Lutheran theologians differed on this theory, J. Andreae and J. Brenz retaining Luther's doctrine on the omnipresence, while Chemnitz followed Melancthon's stress on Christ's will. The Formula of Concord followed the latter group here, teaching no more than ubivolo praesentia or multivolo praesentia in the sense of Chemnitz.<sup>20</sup> This observation discourages any effort to dogmatize a specific theological or philosophical explanatory theory of Christ's presence. Sasse's evaluation of the dogmatic binding effect of such statements is significant: "Not every argument used by Luther and by the Formula of Concord is an article of faith, but only that which the confession has taken from God's Word."<sup>21</sup>

In the Christological dispute, the so-called "exchange of properties,"<sup>22</sup> became an important issue. Luther did not elaborate on it and formulate it to the extent we have it in the Formula of Concord, article VIII, but his concern for the relationship of the divine and human nature of Christ is nevertheless expressed by that technical term. Luther saw Zwingli's distinction of the natures as destroying the personal unity of Jesus Christ. He could not accept that Christ lived, died or rose only according to one nature. That would ultimately lead to Docetism, with two distinct infinita.

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<sup>20</sup>Ibid.; Cf. Sol. Decl. VIII, 78: "wo er will," BS 1043.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., p. 340.

<sup>22</sup>Communicatio idiomatum, in essence repels the extra calvinisticum, that Christ's body has an existence also outside of the flesh.

<sup>23</sup>"A Lutheran Contribution to the Present Discussion on the Lord's Supper," Concordia Theological Monthly, XXX (1959) 34, an "idealistic separation of body and soul, the visible and the invisible, the finite and the infinite, and, consequently, of the human and divine nature of Christ." This is Zwingli's position.



Sasse therefore holds that

On the basis of Colossians 1:19 ("that in him should dwell all the fullness of God") and John 14:9 ("he that hath seen me hath seen the Father") Luther believes and teaches the Biblical paradox that the fullness of the Godhead dwells in Jesus, not only after His resurrection and exaltation, but also since His incarnation. This is Luther's Christology.<sup>24</sup>

Holding that the unio personalis is not a new doctrine with Luther, Sasse stresses again that this terminology, that of the communicatio idiomatum, is not a dogma of the Church. It is merely an expression for realities which transcend human reason, but nevertheless are testified in the Scriptures.<sup>25</sup>

Aalen

In his Dogmatisk Grunnriss,<sup>26</sup> Leiv Aalen treats the fundamental character Christology played, not only for the early Church, but also for the Lutheran Church. Confessio Augustana expressly adheres to the so-called doctrine of the two natures, in article III: Of the Son of God. However speculatively this may have been formulated through history, a greater danger is represented by new Protestant liberalism, which disregards the Christological dogma and appeals to Melancthon's phrase that knowing Christ is knowing his beneficial deeds and not his natures.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>24</sup>Sasse, This is, p. 152, previous argumentation in pp. 148-152. The most characteristic aspect of Luther's position here is the genus majesticum, i.e. the application of the majestic qualities to the man Jesus.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid., p. 343.

<sup>26</sup>Leiv Aalen, Dogmatisk Grunnriss (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1965) pp. 58-65.

<sup>27</sup>CR XXI, 85: "hoc est Christum cognoscere beneficia eius cognoscere, non . . . eius naturas, modos incarnationis contueri."



Yet, Melancthon is only preserving himself against scholastic speculation and not propagating a modern anti-metaphysical dogmatic. The vere Deus, vere homo and the homooousios are the dogmatic terms guarding the Biblical concern of monotheism and incarnation. The philosophical terminology of our Creeds does indeed express the dogmatic content of the Gospel's pro nobis.

In the incarnation is therefore implied that the man Jesus is taken up into a unique unity with the godhead (cf. John 10:30 etc.), so that the human nature with body, soul and spirit here is the personal organ for God's salvatory act, more precisely, that the Son as the second person in the godhead is the acting subject in the God-man Jesus Christ, without reducing the human nature to pure passivity.<sup>28</sup>

Aalen stresses the close relationship of Confessio Augustana with the Christological dogma according to Chalcedon. However, it also became necessary for the Formula of Concord, in confrontation with the Reformed, to define the relation between the natures in Christ as a functional union. The unity functions in Christ's work, which is both human and divine, yet without mixing the two, God and man. Thus the communicatio idiomatum, of article VIII in the Formula of Concord, is a Christological doctrine brought out by the dispute over Christ's presence in the Supper.<sup>29</sup>

In the modern Lutheran apologetic situation the realistic understanding of Christ's words of institution, here becomes not only an historical problem but a "dogmatic-historical" problem. If the historicity of the apostolic tradition is given up as myth or legend or at best as temporal and varied understandings, even contradictory to each other,

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<sup>28</sup>Aalen, p. 60.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid., pp. 63-64.



then the result is not only the fall of one of several hypotheses, but "faith's confession to Jesus Christ as true God and true man is broken."<sup>30</sup> In the question of the Real Presence we are encountered by the same problem as in interpreting the person and work of Jesus, namely that "God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself" (2 Cor. 5:19).

Jesus Christ as the crucified and resurrected, by the institution as a real occurrence, is present also after the exaltation "in, with and under bread and wine," with "his holy body and blood," however meaningless this may be to so-called modern consciousness; otherwise the faith and confession of the Church and thereby the Supper as a sacrament lacks any real basis.<sup>31</sup>

Aalen stresses all along that for the spiritualism of the Reformation era, the heritage from Augustine was decisive, specifically his philosophical presuppositions of Neo-platonism.<sup>32</sup> The dispute of the Reformation was thus primarily a Christological one, focusing on the incarnation. Melancthon's later uncertainty on the doctrine of the Supper, must also be sought in this tradition, humanism being a distinct part.

Aalen finds little interest in elaborating on the omnipresence of Christ. He only stresses that Luther tore down the local concept that Christ today is in heaven and not on earth, by theological argumentation, that concept being an expression of a philosophical worldview. Luther countered by holding that God's throne is His creation, and that Christ at his right hand therefore is everywhere. But Luther's doctrine of ubiquity

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<sup>30</sup>Leiv Aalen, "Uppopulaere Trossannheter," unpublished mimeographed lectures (Oslo: Menighetsfakultetet, 1969), p. 58. Cf. W. Elert, Der christliche Glaube (Hamburg: Furche-Verlag, 1960), p. 380.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid.

<sup>32</sup>Leiv Aalen, Ord og Sakrament. Bidrag til dogmatikken. (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1966) pp. 73-74.



is by Aalen considered as a mere helping hypothesis for demythologizing the worldview of his day. "The Real Presence neither stands nor falls with hypotheses of that kind."<sup>33</sup> The theological concern of Luther is better expressed as

God's throne in Christ has become a throne of grace which now has been erected on earth . . . This presence is, as distinguished from his majestic presence, a presence of grace, and it is only by this gracious real presence in Christ that God by his Holy Spirit creates fellowship with men.<sup>34</sup>

The spiritual presence of the Reformed is thus inadequate to express the content of the Eucharistic words, which implies a bodily presence both in Word and sacrament.

Luther stresses continuously that the Incarnate One meets us already in the Word as a means of grace, and then also with his whole and full human nature, that he in fact bodily lives in man's heart by the Spirit.<sup>35</sup>

Precisely on the problem of the Real Presence, Aalen sees Lutheran theology, with its literal interpretation of Christ's words, as a theologia crucis, which in the Calvinistic denial of the Real Presence can see nothing but a theologia gloriae. Evangelical faith holds on, not only to the pure word of Scripture as such, but also to the fact that Christ still is present, as nowhere else, in his Word and Sacrament.

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<sup>33</sup>Ibid., p. 87, footnote 63, where Aalen refers to Sasse's assertion that the Formula of Concord follows Melancthon, rather than Luther, on the theory concerning the ubiquity; cf. supra, p. 14, and infra, pp. 45-47.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid., p. 75, referring to John 1:14.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid., p. 76. Aalen cites A. Peters of Heidelberg in support of this observation, referring to his Realpräsenz. Luthers Zeugnis von Christi Gegenwart im Abendmahl (Berlin: Lutherisches Verlagshaus, c.1960) pp. 115-122.



Thus everything evolves around the incarnation as "the mystery of our religion" (1 Tim. 3:16).<sup>36</sup>

Hardt

Chapter I of Tom Hardt's doctoral work is called Verum corpus, subtitled "The identity of the heavenly and the eucharistic Body of Christ."<sup>37</sup> This indicates the program of Hardt's work and perception of the Lord's Supper. The fact of the incarnation is not dissolved by the ascension and glorification. With approval does he cite Chrysostom as holding that "our flesh" is in heaven, being worshipped by angels, and referring to the Lord's Supper as "heaven on earth." He himself affirms that "The heavenly world is unabridgedly present on the Eucharistic table of the Christian congregation. What makes heaven is not the heavenly glory, but the presence of the Lord."<sup>38</sup>

The Christology of Cyril is to be considered the basis for any majesty-predication of Jesus' humanity. Yet, in the consecutive history we find a reluctance toward ascribing the various divine qualities to Jesus as God and man. He may have them either only as God, or not really as God. The Ockhamistic school signifies a break-through, advocating Cyrilian Christology. Gabriel Biel distinguished between a "repletive" (divine) and a "definitive" presence, both being distinguished from the

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<sup>36</sup>Cf. Elert, p. 383, the end of the incarnation would be the end of reconciliation, thus no justification.

<sup>37</sup>"Den himmelska och eucharistiska Kristi lekamens identitet," in Tom Hardt, Venerabilis & Adorabilis Eucharistia (Uppsala: Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis, c.1971) p. 9.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid.



"circumscriptive" presence, thus expanding Thomas' distinction.<sup>39</sup> But Biel did not ascribe the repletive presence to any creature, including Christ. Hardt therefore rejects the assumption that the nominalistic school was the chief preparatory instance for Luther, however important it was.

Luther and his followers meant an omnipresence which is repletive and divine, not a definitive/circumscriptive or angelic/human as a result of the personal unification and not a positive act of the divine will; this is a Christological dogma and not a thesis set up by proof of reasoning.<sup>40</sup>

The repletive presence is precisely what opens for also a definitive presence, and makes such a mode possible. The godhead could not be "grasped and treated by hands," before the incarnation. Through this event it possessed a physical existence in the circumscriptive-definitive manhood. The sacramental miracle is seen as a direct parallel to this.<sup>41</sup>

The difficulty of relating the two natures to each other in Christ, was for Luther not a psychological problem as for Thomas, elaborating on the "emptying out" (Kenosis) of the divine qualities. It was a genuine Christological problem. Christ's "form of a servant" is a result

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<sup>39</sup>Ibid., p. 43, cf. Tom Hardt, Om Altarets Sakrament. En bok om den lutherska nattvardsläran (Uppsala: Bokförlaget Pro Veritate, c.1973) pp. 33-37, Luther's Christology closer to Eastern than Western thinking.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid., pp. 44, 57-58, on the nominalistic modes of presence: (1) circumscriptive: concrete, physical, according to nature; (2) definitive: special character, not bound by laws of nature, e.g. Christ walking through closed doors; (3) repletive: divine omnipresence, only that of the godhead.

<sup>41</sup>Ibid., p. 79; cf. pp. 77-78.



of His own specific act of will, and is not identical to His incarnation.<sup>42</sup>

Hardt disagrees with both Elert and Sasse,<sup>43</sup> who hold that Luther's doctrine of ubiquity broke the limits of the medieval world picture. The term ubiquity was not new with Luther, and is not unrelated to the medieval world picture. On the other hand, Luther broke with medieval Christology. Luther's new Christological interpretation came out first in 1526 in his Sermon on the Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ, where the full repletive presence of Christ's body is urged. The year before in his controversy with Carlstadt, his argumentation was still that of Thomistic categories, even though refuting the Thomistic notion of only one place of presence of Christ's body. In the great Confession of 1528, we find the nominalistic distinction of the modes of presence, yet with the newly won insight of the Christological significance of the omnipresence. "The humanity of Christ, without any spiritualization takes on the Creator's relation to his creation."<sup>44</sup> Neither the definitive nor the repletive mode of presence causes any change of Christ's true body. The decisive new with Luther is that the creation rests in Christ's body, rather than He in the creation. Christ's omnipresence does therefore not dissolve his physical character. There is a parallel existence of repletive and circumscriptive or definitive presence. Also at the first Supper we find these modes of presence, as explained by the

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<sup>42</sup>Ibid., p. 54; cf. WA XVII, ii, 243, WA XLV, 240.

<sup>43</sup>Supra, p. 10, and W. Elert, The Structure of Lutheranism (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, c.1962) pp. 414-415.

<sup>44</sup>Tom Hardt, Venerabilis, p. 59.



authors of the Apology of the Formula of Concord:<sup>45</sup> (1) Repletive, the Creator's body as filling everything; (2) Definitive, in the bread; and (3) Circumscriptive, sitting at the table.

On the question of communicatio idiomatum, Hardt maintains that Luther distinguished between "nature" and "work." Christ had the natural properties of soul and body, but did not do the works typical of man, and had in addition divine properties that would partly seem to negate the human qualities. Luther opposes all talk of Christ's suffering as an act in abstracto. "Luther's struggle for commucatio idiomatum is a struggle precisely for the nomina," where God is the subject of a human predicate. This is what Nestorius denied, as did Zwingli, but Luther defended. In this respect Luther considers himself the right heir of scholasticism.<sup>46</sup>

Even though Hardt would concede the notion that the conflict on the Lord's Supper could not have been decided only through this Christological struggle, asserting it is a means of help in that struggle, he nevertheless opposes the tendency to relegate it to a hypothesis, as Sasse and E. Sommerlath would do.<sup>47</sup> The omnipresence and sacramental presence are related to each other by way of necessity.

Hardt further rejects assertions of H. Gollwitzer and W. Neuser that Melanchthon here deviated from Luther. "Melanchthon expresses in clear, dogmatic formulations Luther's teaching on the participation of

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<sup>45</sup>Ibid., p. 61, T. Kirchner, N. Selnecker, M. Chemnitz.

<sup>46</sup>Ibid., pp. 68-73.

<sup>47</sup>Ibid., pp. 79-80, referring to Sasse, Vom Sakrament, p. 120 (Sommerlath), p. 341 (Sasse).



Christ's human nature in the attributes of the godhead."<sup>48</sup> He advocates the repletive presence, where Christ in his omnipotence, which includes both godhead and manhood, is present. Objecting to localizing tendencies as in the Augustinian phrase: "Christ is bodily everywhere,"<sup>49</sup> which was adopted by the Gnesio-Lutherans, he nevertheless conceded to a certain local concept of Christ at God's right, or perhaps better, a special heavenly mode of presence after the ascension. An explanatory phrase used by Melanchthon here is also Augustinian, "the omnipresence is total, but not in everything."<sup>50</sup> This does not dispute the omnipresence of Christ's body, but rather a physical circumscriptive omnipresence.

Quite early the term "totus Christus" became the expression for Melanchthon for the repletive presence of both natures, when he would describe the sacramental presence in its identity with the omnipresence.<sup>51</sup>

Melanchthon's omnipresence thus poses an alternative to a too local concept and to the definitive mode of presence. His concern was to liberate the Lutheran understanding of the sacramental presence from what he felt to be materialistic notions.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>48</sup>Ibid., p. 90, referring to CR I, 949: "Et quod quidam disputant, Christi corpus non posse multis in locis esse, id non satis probant. Christus enim exaltatus est super omnes creaturas, et adest ubique."

<sup>49</sup>Ibid., p. 95, "Christus corporaliter est ubique."

<sup>50</sup>Ibid., p. 96, referring to CR XV, 1271: "Ubique totus est, sed non totum."

<sup>51</sup>Ibid., pp. 96, 99: Brenz carried Melanchthon's position on, identifying sacramental presence with the repletive mode. The break between the two was not on dogmatic reasons: "Both Melanchthon and Brenz had expressions in their teaching that could be used against the Real Presence, when brought out of context," p. 105.

<sup>52</sup>Ibid., pp. 98-99, Melanchthon was disgusted with the blasphemic expressions produced by the Reformed to ridicule the Lutheran position, e.g. that Christ's body "an etiam in cloacis sit." Ibid., p. 107, Brenz



Luther's view on the three modes of presence was carried on by Chemnitz. Most theologians seem to deny that Chemnitz held to the omnipresence of Christ's human nature. Hardt rejects this denial and supports Piepers' rather lonely position here.<sup>53</sup>

The Christology of the Formula of Concord is by critics said to be a conglomerate of opposing viewpoints. Hardt denies that there exists a discordia here; however, he concedes that there is a difference in the relationship between the Christology and sacramental presence. The southern Germans, the Tübingen theologians, rejected the definitive mode of presence as that of the sacrament, holding only to the repletive. Chemnitz and northerners, while admitting to a distinction between the special heavenly presence of the glorified body and the sacramental presence, did not rule out that Christ very well can reveal himself in the form of earthly life, whenever he wills.<sup>54</sup> The unity in the Christology does therefore, according to Hardt, not include the relation between Christology and the sacraments.

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and Andreae carried his concern on by posing the omnipresence as a guarantee against sacramental materialism. Ibid., p. 152, for Bucer, Melancthon's position meant that Lutheranism proposed a via media between Reformed spiritualism and Roman materialism; his optimism did not pervade. Cf. Elert, Structure, p. 314: "right to point out that all those who advocated the doctrine of ubiquity had rejected the 'inclusive omnipresence' (omnipraesentia inclusiva)."

<sup>53</sup>Ibid., p. 111, referring to F. Pieper, Christian Dogmatics (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, c.1953), pp. 198-203.

<sup>54</sup>Ibid., pp. 114-115; cf. M. Chemnitz, De duabus Naturis in Christo (Lipsiae: Michael Lantzenberger, 1600), p. 176, the omnipresence makes the sacramental presence "non tantum possibile sed & facile."



## Word Qualifies Element--Exegetical Basis

Sasse

Sasse has a great concern for retaining God's Word pure.<sup>55</sup> Confronted by exegetical criticism such as that of E. Käsemann, holding that there is no institution of a sacrament in the records of the Gospels (John's accounts being later interpolations), it seems necessary to seek precisely the exegetical basis, since the Lutheran teaching of the Real Presence in fact stands or falls with it. Sasse concedes that the Zwinglian-Calvinistic concept can "zur Not" apply to the synoptic texts, but must, however, disregard completely the strong testimony of Paul and John.<sup>56</sup> The difficult task today is that the authority of Scripture no longer is unequivocally accepted, while in the sixteenth century all parties claimed Scriptural support. Therefore Sasse maintains that in discussing the Supper, one must first agree upon the norm, otherwise all arguments are futile. The literal meaning of the words of institution is extra controversarium for Luther, and rightly so, says Sasse.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>55</sup>H. Sasse, "Warum müssen wir an der lutherischen Abendmahlslehre festhalten?," Allgemeine Evangelisch-Lutherische Kirchenzeitung, LXXI (1938), 97: "Dass wir dein Wort und Sakrament rein behalten bis an unser End." Principal argumentation throughout this article, pp. 53-55, 79-82, 90-97.

<sup>56</sup>Ibid., LXXI, 95-97, "Mit dem Abendmahl des Paulus fällt auch das Abendmahl Jesu Christi."

<sup>57</sup>H. Sasse, "Zur Frage des Abendmahlsgesprächs," Irgeja Lutherana, XIX (1958), 150-155. Cf. WA XV, 394.



We have to consider, therefore, both the exegetical discussion itself, and the principal assertion that it is the Word which makes the sacrament what it is.

Sasse stresses that the early Church advocated a very concrete and literal understanding of the words of institution. The words are power-words and effect a change in the elements, which are transformed.<sup>58</sup> Even though Augustine may be seen as the father of the symbolic understanding, determined by Neo-platonism's distinction of res and signum, his struggle against Pelagianism and Donatism shows also his stress on the objectivity of the sacrament. Berengar is therefore considered the actual initiator of the tropological interpretation of the crucial words of institution, meaning: "This signifies my body."<sup>59</sup>

A significant person in the reformation years was Cornelius Honius, a Dutch humanist, exercising strong influence on Zwingli. Although himself a humanist, Zwingli in his early years displayed no doubt as to the miraculous character of the Supper. He was much influenced by Luther's early writings. Honius takes up the figurative interpretation of Berengar, which also John Wycliffe had advocated to a certain degree, in a treatise (or letter) in 1524. He understands the sacrament as

a visible pledge that Christ added to the promise of the Gospel . . . Likewise through the Lord's Supper we are reminded to trust Christ's promise. To have such confidence in Him means, according to John 6, to eat His body and to drink His blood.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>58</sup>Sasse, This is, p. 27, most common Greek term metabolē, or verb metaballein.

<sup>59</sup>Ibid., p. 33, est interpreted as significat.

<sup>60</sup>Ibid., pp. 122-123.



He rejects the Roman concept of a miracle in the Lord's Supper, showing that the Creed contains no such article, and asserting that Jesus' miracles were all compatible with experience. While Luther strongly rejected Honius' letter, Zwingli wholeheartedly accepted it, giving up his previous position.

We may summarize the exegetical problem Luther, and with him Melancthon, had to deal with in the time up to the Marburg Colloquy, in the following points:

1. Zwingli's figurative exegesis, est means significat;
2. Oecolampadius' opinion that corpus must be taken figuratively, not est, since no copula existed in Aramaic, claiming Tertullian as authority;
3. Carlstadt's claim that hoc points to Jesus' body, not the bread (he considered himself an ally of Zwingli, as did also Wittenberg);
4. The spiritual concept of both Zwingli and Oecolampadius, that John 6:63 "the flesh is of no avail" refutes Luther's bodily interpretation;
5. The assertion that the literal interpretation leads to absurdities.

Luther's overall principle is that we must adhere to the literal meaning unless there clearly is a figurative indication or if it violates an article of faith.<sup>61</sup> The answers to the mentioned points will briefly be stated.

(1) The sentence "This is my body" is a demonstrative, descriptive sentence, establishing a fact in plain words. Luther challenges his opponents to give the proofs, "I for one cannot admit that such clear words present

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<sup>61</sup> Ibid., p. 147; cf. p. 232, Luther indicated his position on his first appearance at the Marburg Colloquy, by writing with chalk on the table "Hoc est corpus meum."



a (hermeneutical) problem."<sup>62</sup> He readily admits that Scripture has metaphors, but they are clearly so. Examples such as "I am the door," and "I am the vine," are refuted by Luther. The trope in those cases is not the "is" but "door" and "vine." The copula can never mean anything but copula.<sup>63</sup> (2) The reluctance at taking "body" literally, is only based on geometrical and rational reasons. Why not consider the Lord's ascension a trope? That is just as unreasonable a fact. (3) Refuting Carlstadt's exegesis, Luther asserted that "this" was used in a common way of speech in which the containing vessel is mentioned instead of its content, as when you say "here is hundred G $\ddot{u}$ lden," pointing to the purse. Luther rejected that this was figurative speech (what Calvin later accused Lutherans of) on the same level as that of his opponents. This form for abbreviated speech was called synecdoche.<sup>64</sup> Luther stresses strongly that John 6 must be understood from the words of institution, not vice versa. He agreed that this passage did not speak of the sacrament, but of a spiritual eating, refuting any Capernaitic notion. But he objected to Zwingli's assertion that a rule was here laid down for how the words of institution were to be interpreted. The word "flesh" does not mean that

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<sup>62</sup>Ibid., p. 231, quaestio.

<sup>63</sup>Ibid., especially treated in the Confession of 1528, WA XXVI, 270-272. Similar anti-symbolic treatment of the words of institution by Theodore of Mopsuestia; cf. J. N. D. Kelly, Early Christian Doctrines (New York: Harper & Row, c.1958) p. 444.

<sup>64</sup>Ibid., pp. 163, 253-254, Luther refers to John 1:33, where Spirit and dove are used in the same fashion. He uses the synecdoche "in order to satisfy the sophists," a concession to its relative worth. Cf. Sasse, Vom Sakrament, pp. 153, 174, on Melancthon's change of emphasis.



of Christ, but of the old Adam.<sup>65</sup> (5) Absurdities for human reason are not legitimate grounds for abandoning the word. "Testimonies from Scripture are required."<sup>66</sup>

Sasse gives Zwingli credit for being straight forward in his argumentation and for seeing the impossibility of uniting his own and Luther's view. "There is no via media between est and significat. It shows the greatness of Zwingli in contrast to Bucer, Calvin, and all the prophets of a middle road between Wittenberg and Zürich."<sup>67</sup>

The inability of modern exegetes to reach agreement on the meaning of the so-called parable (the "is"), is to Sasse a strong indication that the Last Supper was not a parabolic action.<sup>68</sup> To this contributes also the fact that the words were spoken in an historical given situation. The exegesis of 1 Cor. 10:16 expressly supports the literal exegesis as well as the continuity of the bread-substance. The fact that Paul's understanding was not refuted by the apostles is an indication of the unity of the New Testament. Paul did not identify bread and body, but identified the presence of the body to that of the bread.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>65</sup>Ibid., p. 178, referring to WA XXVI, 374.

<sup>66</sup>Ibid., p. 251; cf. p. 33 on Zwingli's words in Marburg: "Deus non proponit nobis incomprehensibilia."

<sup>67</sup>Ibid., p. 287.

<sup>68</sup>Ibid., p. 362, mentioning personalistic interpretations, or P. Althaus' symbolic understanding (separation of body and blood), alluding to Jesus' death, or J. Jeremias' tertium comparationis in the breaking of the bread and the red color of the wine, or E. Lohmeyer's claim that the "this" indicates the center of attention at the celebration (in the future), rather than the bodily present Jesus.

<sup>69</sup>Ibid., p. 322.



Moving to the principal aspect, we note that in the Marburg Colloquy, Luther brought out again and again the qualifying power of the Word. Answering Oecolampadius' accusation that he ascribed too much to the element, Luther held that

You must not look so much upon what is said, but rather who says it. Since God speaks thus you must embrace the Word . . . We do not ascribe dignity to the bread but to the Word and to Him who deals with us through the Word.<sup>70</sup>

Luther's adversaries wrote against him as if he spoke of the sacrament without the Word.

When, however, something is said by "the high majesty," by God Himself, such a word does not only "signify," but it effects and brings about that which it signifies, not through our power, but through God's.<sup>71</sup>

The minister speaks ex persona Christi, that is, he speaks what Christ spoke, which implies also what Christ meant. Thus the Words are effective when spoken in Christ's meaning, otherwise they would be a magical formula.

Calvin's attempt to find a via media is a failure to both sides, losing both the literal meaning and the metaphorical. He therefore speaks of a feeding of the souls. Sasse thus affirms that for Calvin there is no Real Presence of the body of Christ in the sacrament. His position is rather a revivification of Marcion's Docetism.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>70</sup>Ibid., p. 235. Cf. E. Bizer, "Die Abendmahlslehre in den lutherischen Bekenntnisschriften," Theologische Existenz Heute, No. 47 (1955), pp. 3-5, and P. Brunner, Pro Ecclesia (Berlin: Lutherisches Verlagshaus, 1962), p. 195, opposing going behind the New Testament text.

<sup>71</sup>Ibid., p. 242; cf. p. 246 "a human word is a mere sound."

<sup>72</sup>Sasse, Vom Sakrament, pp. 53-54.



The attitude of the Lutheran Church on the sacrament is therefore not one of traditionalism, but expresses that the Word of God cannot be maintained when the sacrament is abandoned. Resisting the drawing of a clear line of demarcation between Word and Sacrament, Sasse holds that "Even in the most 'sacramental' churches the Word is always regarded as that which constitutes the Sacrament," as even the Roman Church has not forgotten. The element or materia is always inferior to the Word as the forma. Sasse emphasizes this to counter those efforts from modern liturgical movements where the sacrament is understood from the aspect of the element,

as if certain mysterious natural qualities of water or of bread and wine . . . revealed the essence of the sacraments . . . They lead unavoidably back to a pagan mystery religion in which nature and the powers of nature are deified and the creature is worshipped instead of the creator.<sup>73</sup>

It is Sasse's deep conviction that in defending the literal meaning of "This is my body," Luther did not defend a theological view of his own or of a theological school. It was a basic dogma of the Christian Church. "With this est stands and falls Incarnation. And with the reality of the Incarnation stands and falls the Church of Jesus Christ."<sup>74</sup>

Aalen

The nucleus of Luther's understanding of the Supper is contained in what his Confession of 1528 calls praedicatio identica, that is, an identification of Christ's body and blood with the elements, as the words

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<sup>73</sup>Sasse, This is, pp. 373-374; cf. p. 296.

<sup>74</sup>H. Sasse, "What is the Sacrament of the Altar?," The Springfielder XXXII (1963), 20.



of institution indicate.<sup>75</sup> We note that the identity of predicates does not speak of a direct identity, rather an indirect one, of entities that rationally cannot be unified. While K. Barth considers this an insignificant exegesis, and thus disregards it, H. Gollwitzer explicitly holds that the Word was decisive for Luther, that his exegesis forced him into his doctrine.<sup>76</sup> Aalen asserts the right observation of Gollwitzer, that even though other considerations of dogmatic kind may have influenced him, Luther was determined primarily by Christ's institutional words. Gollwitzer himself holds that the Church's understanding of the institution and command of Jesus cannot be bound to the naive understanding of the record as historical, appealing to modern New Testament scholarship.<sup>77</sup>

Aalen observes that modern exegesis denies the realistic meaning in the mouth of Jesus and relegates Paul's and John's realistic understanding to the so-called theology of the Church, conceiving of it as a cult-legend, a projection backwards from a hellenistic cultic ritual. As for J. Jeremias' symbolical concept, Aalen ironically adheres to the objection that parables are not meant to be eaten.<sup>78</sup> The analogy of Old Testament

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<sup>75</sup>Aalen, "Upopulaere Trossannheter," p. 57, referring to WA XXVI, 437.

<sup>76</sup>H. Asmussen and others, Abendmahlsgemeinschaft? (München: Chr. Kaiser, 1937), p. 102. Cf. Elert, Christliche Glaube, p. 356: "die Sakramente (können) nur eine Abart des Wortes oder dessen Bekräftigung sein."

<sup>77</sup>Zur Lehre Vom Heiligen Abendmahl (München: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1964), p. 26. Cf. Gollwitzer, footnote 114.

<sup>78</sup>Aalen, "Upopulaere Trossannheter," p. 60, referring to J. Jeremias, Die Abendmahlswort Jesu (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1967) p. 222. Cf. Aalen, Ord og Sakrament, pp. 253-255.



prophetical actions of parabolic nature has no parallel in the New Testament and in Jesus' life. Yet, the passover meal offers a parallel as a covenant meal, and precisely here the difference from being any parable or analogy becomes evident. While an analogy is to symbolize the actual occurrence, the eating and drinking in the Supper has obviously in itself been regarded as the fulfillment of the words. This realistic understanding of Paul and John is seldom denied by exegetes, even those who interpret the words of institution symbolically. Yet the link to the historical basis in the Jesus-situation is undermined. One seems content with merely a table-fellowship of Jesus and his disciples. Thus in Arnoldshain<sup>79</sup> one did not care about the historical "the night when he was betrayed," and the institution of Jesus. The hopelessness of achieving exegetical unity, prompted Käsemann to demand a dogmatic solution as the only way of achieving any common basis.

Aalen discusses to a certain extent the existential influence on the interpretation of the words of institution. He observes that R. Bultmann on several critical points is determined by his systematic approach rather than by purely exegetical reasons. The sacramental aspects of Paul and John are not denied in the Bultmannian school, but relegated to a secondary position by their hermeneutical point of view, ascribing it to hellenistic tradition, ruling out Jesus' Jewish background. Aalen asserts, with R. Prenter, that when the apostolic tradition is questioned, a dogmatic problem arises, namely "what will the consequences

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<sup>79</sup>The place for discussions between Lutherans, Reformed and United, from 1948-1957, when the Arnoldshainer Abendmahlsthesen was published. Infra, pp. 146-149.



for the doctrine and practice of the Church be if it should become obvious that right from the time of the apostles one has misunderstood Jesus on the Supper." This question cannot be treated as being of no importance to how the so-called historical Jesus is related to the sacramental meal.<sup>80</sup> This is completely neglected and without interest for the existential schools.

Aalen is not opposed to historical investigation, not even of the strata of the New Testament's record on the Supper, so as to get as accurate a picture as possible. But whatever the scholars here can propose can never direct the understanding of the Church on the Supper, because "the Church must adhere to the existing canon and not to the changing historical-critical hypotheses as to what lies behind or ahead of the texts."<sup>81</sup> This is in exact opposition to Gollwitzer, for example, who would hold that the confessional aspect must not be tied to a questionable "historical Jesus." Aalen therefore stresses the consensus in the apostolic tradition, rather than possible divergencies, urging the supreme importance of the Pauline and Johannine testimony, and agrees with Sasse in his rejection of the symbolic interpretation as exegetically possible.<sup>82</sup> It is impossible to hold on to the "truly and substantially" of Christ's body and blood in the Supper, without the basis of the Biblical testimony of the identity between bread and body.<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>80</sup>Leiv Aalen, "Luthersk teologi og kirke idag," Tidsskrift for Teologi og Kirke XXXIX (1968), 267.

<sup>81</sup>Ibid., XXXIX, 273.

<sup>82</sup>Aalen, Ord og Sakrament, pp. 253-254. Cf. Aalen, Grunnriss, p. 100.

<sup>83</sup>Ibid., p. 255, referring to Apology X, 4, BS 248.



Hardt

Hardt treats the Scriptural basis in his little book Om Altarets Sakrament. The Scriptural basis for Luther was absolute and he ridiculed the consciences of those who objected to his Biblical nearsightedness, holding it to be unspiritual.<sup>84</sup> Hardt opposes the principle within much of Luther scholarship that everything has to be traced back to the Gospel. Such a systematic motivation from an article of faith is not that of Luther himself;

The highest and only virtue, art and glory of faith is that it does not want to know the benefit of faith, or why it is necessary. Because faith sets no limits for God nor demands answers from Him why and by what imperative necessity He commands such things; that would be unwise, give God the glory and believe his very words.<sup>85</sup>

Each article of faith is its own principle, thus a dogmatic presupposition of the sacrament as a means of grace is not decisive and should in fact not have a place in the interpretation of Jesus' words. The heresy is therefore characterized not only by the denial of central truths, but by any revealed truth, as Luther says:

He who makes God a liar even in a single word, and blasphemously says it is unimportant that He is blasphemed and made a liar, he blasphemes God in his wholeness and holds all blasphemy as insignificant.<sup>86</sup>

The question of truth and error must therefore, according to Hardt, be very much alive. Heeding God's Word is the counterpart to being heard by God.

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<sup>84</sup>Hardt, Om Altarets, p. 11, referring to WA XXIII, 73.

<sup>85</sup>Ibid., pp. 12-13, quoting WA XXIII, 249; cf. p. 15.

<sup>86</sup>Ibid., p. 15, quoting WA XXIII, 85.



For Luther's time, as for today, Hardt asserts that opposition to the literal meaning of the words of institution is not based on exegesis, but on a dogmatic presupposition that rejects the "low" and "fleshly" implications of such an interpretation. A figurative interpretation leaves the words without serious meaning; we are only left with a meal of commemoration. The trope, in parables, does not merely refer to the previous word, but qualifies it, implying a higher dignity. Likewise the notion of a symbolic breaking of Jesus' body is dismissed by the fact that breaking the bread was the usual course of action in any meal. Hardt concludes that Reformed symbolism is an "escape from the facts." It is not a blunt belief in reason, as for atheism, but rather "a pious rationalism, which for Luther, is a greater enemy of the Biblical truth than a heathen, who would have to confess the clear meaning of the words of institution."<sup>87</sup>

Asserting that the Lutheran "is," generally is accepted as decisive, and thus treated, Hardt turns his attention to the word "this." Rejecting the nonsensical meaning of medieval scholasticism, that "this" meant Jesus' body,<sup>88</sup> Luther asserted the simple meaning of "this" as the bread. He contested the philosophical interpretation "My body is my body," Aristotelian logic of linguistic structure demanding this identification of subject and predicate. Luther held quite simply to the Word and believed firmly "that Christ's body is not merely in the

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<sup>87</sup>Ibid., p. 21.

<sup>88</sup>Ibid., p. 42; cf. supra, p. 28.



bread, but that the bread is Christ's body."<sup>89</sup> An exegetical, as well as Christological parallel to Jesus' words would be "This man is God"; as the man Jesus is God, so the bread is Christ's body. Luther's adversaries held that his interpretation demanded a change in gender, that is the masculine hic instead of the neutral hoc. Luther rejected this both because in Hebrew there is no such distinction, but also, and more important, the sentence is one of common speech and common sense.<sup>90</sup>

As for Melancthon's dislike for the synecdoche of Luther, Hardt asserts that "The difference between Melancthon and Luther is not the use of the synecdoche but rather the content of it."<sup>91</sup>

It is necessary in this connection also to point out the principal aspect of the Words as constitutive force. Luther distinguished between those words of Christ that presuppose faith to be realized, and those that work irrespective of faith. The words of institution belong to the latter group. Hardt holds that "Christ's body which long ago was created and made (in the Virgin's womb), is present, when the holy words are uttered."<sup>92</sup>

Luther establishes the sacrament's validity on the words of institution, and neither on priest's nor recipient's faith. They are divine, spiritfilled creator-words. That this principle is to be somewhat compromised, we shall see when the consecratory aspect is treated, where it

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<sup>89</sup>Ibid.; cf. WA VI, 511, implying sacramental union. Cf. Hardt, Venerabilis, pp. 129, 149.

<sup>90</sup>Hardt, Venerabilis, p. 130, referring to WA VI, 511, "usus loquendi et sensus communis" implying "iste panis est corpus meum."

<sup>91</sup>Ibid., p. 144.

<sup>92</sup>Ibid., pp. 87-88, referring to WA XXVI, 287.



is stressed that for Luther, the dogmatic exposition can never be replaced by a biblicistic appeal to the "Bibleword."<sup>93</sup> Verbal recitation does not guarantee the right understanding, implying that the primary function of the words are consecratory, not merely qualifying. Augustine's position, that the sacrament is present where the word is added to the element, therefore seems inadequate.<sup>94</sup> Christ's command at the institution, relates the validity of the sacrament not only to the word and element, but to the institution itself, which includes the correct comprehension of it. The sacrament celebrated without a clear confession of the minister to the Real Presence, gives nothing but bread and wine.<sup>95</sup> Melancthon's deviation from this is clear. He resisted the thought of power-words, looking rather to the function and content, that is contained in the Gospel.

Hardt is in agreement also with Laurentius Petri in asserting that it is the meaning expressed in the letters and syllables which is the power working the sacrament.<sup>96</sup> He also seeks support in Chemnitz' evaluation of the Council of Trent. "In adherence with those fathers, who saw the consecration in the words and not in the canon, Chemnitz stresses the power of the words of institution."<sup>97</sup> Yet he admits that Chemnitz

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<sup>93</sup>Hardt, Om Altarets, pp. 58-59.

<sup>94</sup>Hardt, Venerabilis, p. 157: "accedat verbum et fit sacramentum." Cf. p. 166.

<sup>95</sup>Ibid., p. 167, WA XXX, iii, 565: "eitel brod und wein."

<sup>96</sup>Ibid., p. 188, referring to Bo Ahlberg, Laurentius Petris nattvarsuppfattning (Lund: Studia theologica lundensia, 1964), p. 109. "Virtus verborum est in sensu non in litera aut figuris."

<sup>97</sup>Ibid., p. 193.



here stresses the pronouncing of the words in the sacrament, working the miracle. In accordance with this the Apology to the Formula of Concord cites the Augustinian phrase previously mentioned with approval.

Hardt wants to stress the words qualifying power, but also that it is more than a mere qualification by recitation; a confession to its content is necessary, the belief in the consecration miracle becomes the key point.

#### The "How" of the Real Presence

We will here look into the consequences that follow from the Christological understanding previously related. How is the Christological "miracle," the sacramental union of bread and body to be understood? Does the Lutheran Church here take a unique course?

Sasse

While it is true that Luther always stressed the acceptance of the words of institution, in simple faith, leaving the "how" to God, it nevertheless is also true that the formulation of this fact was to create problems and become divisive in the church.

As already noted the effectual power of the words cause a state of being that is different from before they were uttered. The early Church talked about a transformation or at least a change, without answering the "how." Popular superstition and profound speculation, paired with beautiful Eucharistic liturgies, were parts of the background for some of the struggles and dogmatizations that were to follow. The struggle



between Radbertus and Ratramnus in the middle of the ninth century<sup>98</sup> focused on whether the body in the sacrament was that of the historical Christ or not. Ratramnus, who denied this, still would assert a real presence, but not a change of elements. Radbertus would in turn not hold to a truly objective presence, since the recipient's faith was necessary for the reception of the body. They are therefore not really prototypes of the Reformation, even though they may be considered forerunners. Sasse holds that the two great authorities of the early Church, whose influence is most significant here, are Augustine and Ambrose. Augustine's spiritualistic Neo-platonic distinction of res and signum influenced Berengar, Thomas, Wycliffe, Zwingli, Calvin and the early Luther, while Ambrose is regarded as the father of the realistic understanding. The significant element about Augustine is, however, that in his practice he was more realistic than most of his followers. The African Church was then to be the exponent for sacramental spiritualism, while the Roman and the Eastern Church advocated realism. Yet it is significant that the two perceptions existed side by side without excluding each other.

One of Berengar's most ardent opponents, Guitmund of Aversa, writing in the years 1073-1079, analysed dogmatically the types of adversaries to the doctrine of the Real Presence. He divided them into four groups:<sup>99</sup>

- (1) those who, like Berengar denied it completely; (2) the so-called impanatores, holding that the body enters the

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<sup>98</sup>Sasse, This is, p. 23, P. Radbertus, De corpore et sanguine Christi, written 831, published 844, decisive.

<sup>99</sup>Sasse, This is, pp. 33-34.



bread; (3) those advocating a partial conversion of the elements; (4) those who denied manducatio indignorum.

The Ego Berengarius of 1079, being the first dogmatic definition of the Real Presence, spoke of a substantial conversion, that is an identity with the body of Jesus. Berengar was the first to apply the terms accidentia and substantia, though not yet in the later Aristotelian sense. Berengar actually forced his opponents to formulate the theory, later to become the doctrine of transubstantiation. Sasse holds that almost all the elements of the later dogma originated with Guitmund of Aversa.<sup>100</sup>

Another decisive figure was Lanfranc, who early in the Berengarian controversy established the doctrine of manducatio indignorum,<sup>101</sup> thus in fact accepting Augustine's view that Judas, too, had received the consecrated sacrament.

The danger of early scholasticism was its tendency to explain the "miracle," using terms such as transformatio, conversio and mutatio. From this resulted speculations of Capernaitic character. During the twelfth century the expression transubstantiatio appears as a synonym, the origin being unknown.<sup>102</sup> In the Caput Firmiter of the Lateran Council of 1215, we notice, however, that the term "accident" is avoided, as also in the Professio Fidei Tridentina. However, Catechismus Romanus

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<sup>100</sup>Ibid., p. 38; cf. p. 41.

<sup>101</sup>Ibid., p. 40, footnote 26, in Lanfranc, De corpus et sanguine Domini, the unworthy is stated as receiving the body "quantum ad substantiam et non vere quantum ad effectum gratiae."

<sup>102</sup>Ibid., p. 41, Sasse proposed Stephen of Autrun before 1139. Peter Lombard used conversio.



shows, says Sasse, that the term specie is, in fact, the same as accidentia.<sup>103</sup> Thus the distinction between the "substance" and the "accidents" became an integral part of the transubstantiation dogma.

A common Protestant prejudice toward this Catholic dogma is that it is materialistic. This would, according to Sasse, also apply to the Lutheran conception of a true and substantial presence, as would the Calvinistic criticism of magic.<sup>104</sup> But for Catholic dogmaticians since the time of their father, Thomas Aquinas, "substance" is a metaphysical concept, understood in an Aristotelian sense, that is the innermost essence of an individual thing which remains if we take away all qualities attached to it, the accidents. Thus, transubstantiation is not a change from one substance into another substance, materialistically.

The Lutheran objection to this is that it is a wrong philosophical explanation or description of a miracle which defies all human attempts of explanation. Even though the miracle remains in the sphere of metaphysics and spirituality, the disadvantage is obviously connected to the mentioned accidents, which exist unattached to any proper substance.<sup>105</sup>

Thomas' spiritualistic character is clear also from his stress on the presence as substantial, but not local or circumscriptive. Those are

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<sup>103</sup>Ibid., p. 42, referring to Catechismus Romanus, Pars II, Cap. 4, q. 23.

<sup>104</sup>Ibid., p. 43; cf. Epitome VII, 6, BS 797: "vere et substantialiter." Cf. Sasse, Vom Sakrament, p. 92, referring to Apology X, 2, BS 248: "mutari."

<sup>105</sup>Ibid., pp. 44-46.



qualities belonging to the physical body. Yet the Presence in the sacrament is the presence of the whole Christ, including both natures; this was dogmatized at the Council of Constance, in 1415.<sup>106</sup>

In Duns Scotus we find the so-called "added transubstantiation" as opposed to Thomas's "produced transubstantiation."<sup>107</sup> Duns held that the bread-substance was annihilated, while others held it retained its substance, that is, the so-called consubstantiation theory.

Wycliffe, being a realist, criticised strongly the transubstantiation, and paired with his tropological interpretation, ended up with the so-called remanence-theory, that is, that the bread remains nothing but bread. He does not however give up the Real Presence, although this becomes a mystical presence, an effectual sign of Christ. Sasse labels him a medieval theologian, rather than of the Reformation, as he also does with Huss and his followers.<sup>108</sup> Huss himself did not follow Wycliffe on the sacrament, never denying the transubstantiation; this happened however with many of the later Hussites, as the Taborites and the Unitas Fratrum of 1467.

As for Luther, Sasse holds that "there was never a time in Luther's life when he did not believe the Real Presence of the true body and blood of Christ in the sacrament."<sup>109</sup> Up to 1519 the Real Presence was

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<sup>106</sup>Ibid., pp. 49-50, the so-called concomitantia as basis for the dogmatizing of sub una.

<sup>107</sup>Ibid., p. 55, Scotus used transubstantiatio adductiva, while Thomas had productiva.

<sup>108</sup>Ibid., pp. 56-59 on Wycliffe; pp. 70-75 on Huss.

<sup>109</sup>Ibid., p. 100, compared to the uncertainty on the sub una, which was firmly criticized only after 1530; cf. Smalcald Articles III, 6, BS 451.



understood as transubstantiation. His first criticism of speculations concerning the miracle is found in the Treatise on the Blessed Sacrament of the Holy and True Body of Christ, of 1519, where the mode of change is left open, and all discussions rejected.

Sasse holds that transubstantiation, according to Luther, was an unnecessary philosophical theory, explaining the miracle of the Real Presence, which defies such explanation. It is not to be labeled together with the concept of sacrifice, the main Roman heresy, neither with distribution of only one element. These destroy the sacrament.<sup>110</sup> In his Smalcald Articles (III, 6) Luther only states the fact of the presence of Christ's body and blood, without any elaboration on the "how." The "how" is undogmatized in the Lutheran Church, because Scripture does not answer it. The Lutheran rejection of transubstantiation is thus aimed primarily at its mixture of reason and mystery, its synthesis of faith and Aristotelian philosophy. These philosophical subtleties contradict Paul's testimony in 1 Cor. 10:16 and 11:28.

Melanchthon reacted more and more to Luther's concrete language, and developed already in Augustana Variata of 1540 the functional view, thus in fact leaving Luther's sacramental union. The practical result was giving up the manducatio indignorum, although never frankly admitting it. Sasse expresses surprise that Melanchthon could subscribe to the Smalcald

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<sup>110</sup> Ibid., p. 103; cf. WA XI, 417-456. "Vom Anbeten des Sakraments" of 1523, where his critique is lenient throughout the writing. Cf. The Eucharist as Sacrifice, Lutherans and Catholics in Dialogue III, (1967), p. 196, little significant difference between the two.



Articles of 1537, and holds that the reason why Luther did not openly reject him can only be explained from a human point of view.<sup>111</sup>

The expressions of the Formula of Concord, "in, with, and under the bread,"<sup>112</sup> are merely attempts to express the "is." The Capernaitic misunderstandings of Luther's teaching were rejected in Formula of Concord. The phraseology refers specifically to that of Luther, that is, that "the true body of Christ is crushed with the teeth."<sup>113</sup> The oral eating is rather referred to as supernatural, thus the Capernaitic interpretation of the sacramental union is not that of the Confessions. One may note, however, that "Any doctrine that implied the Real Presence of the true body and blood in, with, and under the elements was for Zwingli fundamentally Catholic and papist."<sup>114</sup>

Bucer, and with him also Calvin, meant to propose a via media between Luther and Zwingli, by stressing that the difference lay merely in the mode of presence. Yet, when the content of the sacramental union was to be specified they could never accept the manducatio oralis and the

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<sup>111</sup>Ibid., pp. 315-319, the characteristic Philippistic expression was "communio corporis et sanguinis Christi."

<sup>112</sup>Ibid., p. 161, cf. Sol. Decl. VII, 32, 35, BS 1027-1028, based on material from the Small Catechism, Augustana X, and especially Large Confession, WA XXVI, 506: "ym brod und wein."

<sup>113</sup>Ibid., p. 162; Ep. VII, 42, BS 803: "sein Fleisch mit Zähnen zereisset." Cf. WA XXVI, 442: "Zureiße mit seinen zenen den fleisch." We may take Luther's crass expressions as reacting to spiritualization and as an attempt to protect the Real Presence, cf. WA XVIII, 206.

<sup>114</sup>Ibid., p. 286. Cf. Brunner, p. 190, opposing any pneumatological approaches; H. Gollwitzer, Coena Domini (München: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1937), p. x, characterizing Luther's position as "dinglich," cf. p. 37.



manducatio indignorum.<sup>115</sup> The crucial issue is thus not whether Christ is present or not, but whether the entire Christ is present, that is, also his body.

As to the question of consubstantiation, Sasse affirms that Luther taught it in his earlier years, but primarily to show that also other attempts were made in the Church to solve the problem. Yet, this philosophical construction is not the teaching of the Church. The "in, with, and under" of the Formula of Concord is not to be understood as inclusio or consubstantio, as shown by Nicolaus Selnecker.<sup>116</sup> Sasse also holds that Luther never used the term itself, but that among the scholastic theories, it was perhaps closest to him. He referred to Pierre d'Ailly in De Captivitate Babylonica to show that even this cardinal had doubts about transubstantiation and would prefer "con-substantiation."<sup>117</sup>

If therefore the sacramental union, the manducatio oralis and the manducatio indignorum are conceded, the question of the "how" could be

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<sup>115</sup>Ibid., p. 305. Bucer introduced the term manducatio indignorum at Wittenberg in 1536, changing Luther's impiorum. While Bucer only implied those who had a historical faith, yet not saving faith, Luther implied always the godless and the hypocrites as well. Cf. pp. 322-329, Calvin's sursum corda, undermines this realistic concept, as expressed in Ep. VII, 2, BS 796.

<sup>116</sup>H. Sasse, "Zum lutherischen Verständnis der Konsekration," Briefe No. 26 (Adelaide, 1952), referring to N. Selnecker "Vom Heiligen Abendmahl des Herrn."

<sup>117</sup>Sasse, This is, p. 102, cf. Sol. Decl. VII, 37, BS 983: "zwei Wesen," or "duas diversas substantias." Comparing other theologians' judgment whether Luther can be said to teach consubstantiation: Positive answer by R. Seeberg, E. Seeberg, A. Haas, B. Hägglund, Th. Tappert, even if the last two have strong reservations on the dualism involved; Negative answer by G. Aulen, F. Pieper, who admits the content seems implied.



left open. This is the express content of the Formula of Concord.<sup>118</sup> Where Scripture is silent so must also theology be.

Aalen

The question of the Real Presence is the key point in the doctrine of the Lord's Supper, and the liturgy of the first century testifies to this; it is unequivocally realistic.<sup>119</sup> The liturgy of the Church was changed on this point only by the Reformed, with their symbolic interpretation.

Luther rejects the scholastic transubstantiation simultaneously with the opposite spiritualism of Wycliffe. His thesis in turn is the praedicatio identica. If the transubstantiation becomes a misconstrued expression of the case, then the spiritualistic symbolism becomes completely heretical because it eliminates the Real Presence itself, thus contradicting Church doctrine. Aalen shows the leniency of Luther toward transubstantiation, without himself holding the misconception as unimportant. He does not seem to give consideration to the legitimacy of the term consubstantiation, but rejects clearly the notion of a materia coelestis as well as an inclusion of the heavenly body into the elements. Even though formulations of Orthodoxy may have been speculative at times,

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<sup>118</sup>Sasse, Vom Sakrament, pp. 171-175, cf. Ep. VII, 2, BS 796: "mit dem Mund empfangen werde von allen denen, so sich dieses Sakraments gebrauchen, sie sein würdig oder unwürdig."

<sup>119</sup>Aalen, Grunnriss, p. 100.



it must be stressed that, any "thingly concept of substance" is foreign to old Lutheranism.<sup>120</sup>

Having stressed an identity of bread and body on exegetical grounds, and with Luther rejected the transubstantiation as sophistry, Aalen refers to the final formulation of the Formula of Concord as decisive for the doctrine of the sacramental union. Bread and body are both present untransformed, and it thus follows that the reception of Christ's body is oral and sacramental. The eating of the body is qualified as sacramental, or spiritual, to make it clear that a Capernaitic, fleshly eating is not implied.<sup>121</sup>

Aalen furthermore holds that the oral eating does not imply that Christ's body and blood is devoured and digested literally, as if a hyper-physical heavenly matter. The body in the Supper is that of the glorified human nature of Christ, which is identical with the crucified and resurrected body. This concept has consequences for the unique gift of the sacrament.<sup>122</sup> To designate this understanding as temporally determined by the ontological speculations of the Reformation, is a Reformed evaluation and not a re-examination of Lutheran theology on its own premises. Referring to the Arnoldshain Theses of 1957, where the term from Augustana

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<sup>120</sup>Leiv Aalen, "Der Kampf um das Evangelium im Abendmahl," Theologische Literaturzeitung XCI (1966), 95: "jener 'dinghafte Substanzbegriff' dem alten Luthertum fremd gewesen ist."

<sup>121</sup>Aalen, Grunnriss, p. 100, referring to Smalcald Articles III, 6, BS 452, and Sol. Decl. VII, 37, BS 983. Cf. Sol. Decl. VII, 63, BS 993: "mündlich und sakramentlich"; and section 105, BS 1009: "solche Niesung mit dem Munde geschicht, die Weise aber geistlich ist."

<sup>122</sup>Ibid.; Aalen, Ord og Sakrament, p. 257; cf. Ep. VII, 42, BS 803.



Variata "with bread and wine," is adopted, Aalen denounces this position as an artificial compromise.<sup>123</sup> The commentary on the theses of 1961 stresses the gift of the body and blood of Christ given by the word in the distribution, yet at the same time refuses to give a more precise definition of the relationship between the elements and the body and blood of Christ.

Melanchthon related the Real Presence to the action, and not to the elements, thus opening for the crypto-Calvinistic tendency which article VII of the Formula of Concord combats. There is no room for Melanchthon's position in the Confessions. This seems irrelevant for the Arnoldshain Theses. Aalen points to the striking number of prepositional expressions, trying to satisfy the members of the committee. The only sensible meaning one can get out of it is the symbolic eating and reception, and thus, with Gollwitzer, to leave the "substantial" Real Presence.<sup>124</sup>

The manducatio indignorum seems best taken care of, in Arnoldshain, from a Lutheran point of view. However, the commentaries from Gollwitzer and P. Brunner show how different the wording has been interpreted. Aalen asserts, in fact, that Brunner's and Gollwitzer's interpretations of the theses are just as irreconcilable as Luther's and Calvin's understandings have ever been. Gollwitzer speaks of nothing but a "spiritual" presence, as Calvin did, and a symbolic eating, regarding the sacrament as a mere verbum visibile. Aalen cannot follow Brunner's assertion that the

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<sup>123</sup>Aalen, Grunnriss, p. 101.

<sup>124</sup>Zur Lehre, pp. 20-21. Cf. Leuenberger Konkordie section 19: "Ein Interesse an der Art der Gegenwart Christi im Abendmahl, das vom dieser Handlung absieht, läuft Gefahr den Sinn des Abendmahls zu verdunkeln."



Real Presence is expressed in the Arnoldshain Theses.<sup>125</sup> Gollwitzer's problem with the "thingly" concept of Luther, shows clearly what the struggle is all about, namely, the Real Presence itself.

The compromise of the unionistic efforts is further brought out by the criticism which Arnoldshain as well as Leuenberg raises against both Calvin and Luther. The classical Calvinistic parallelism is rejected as also any direct formulation on the mode of Christ's presence. Leuenberg has left the interrelation of Christology to the Supper, as we have it in the Formula of Concord. The oral eating which is basic for the Lutheran understanding of the Real Presence is abandoned. The equally important manducatio indignorum seems also here retained, at least out of evangelical concern for the "troubled" faith.<sup>126</sup>

While Gollwitzer in commenting on Arnoldshain openly holds the ontological presuppositions of the Reformation to be untenable, Leuenberg reduces the differences between Reformed and Lutheran to be a "style of theological thinking." Leuenberg has subsumed the Lutheran doctrine of the sacrament under the overall hermeneutical principle of justification, which methodologically is untenable.<sup>127</sup>

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<sup>125</sup>Aalen, Ord og Sakrament, pp. 248-249, referring to August Kimme, "Der Inhalt der Arnoldshainer Abendmahlthesen," Luthertum, XXIII (1960), 34, 77-80. The compromise-character is supported by the fact that E. Sommerlath left in protest. Cf. p. 251 on Gollwitzer's Calvinistic approach, claiming the difference is only de modo praesentia.

<sup>126</sup>Cf. Arnoldshainer Abendmahlthesen, sections 4, 8, and Leuenberger Konkordie, Section 18. Cf. Gollwitzer's rejection in Coena Domini, p. x., of the unworthy's eating; cf. also pp. 309-310.

<sup>127</sup>Leiv Aalen, "Luthersk teologi," Tidsskrift for Teologi og Kirke, XXXIX (1968), 98, 102-103.



Marburg Revisited has, according to Aalen, also misunderstood both parties, in holding that modern scholarship would clear the crucial issues of the sixteenth century, and that the two Confessions agree that the same gift is offered in the preached word and in the administered sacrament.<sup>128</sup>

Aalen finds no reason to state with R. Prenter, that the presence of the body and blood is not primarily personal, but "thingly." This is for him an unacceptable separation of the two parts.<sup>129</sup> With the phrase in Luther's Small Catechism: "the true body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, under bread and wine," one can define Christ's presence as total, that is the whole undivided Christ is present in each part of the bread and in each mouthful of wine. That is the viewpoint of the Tridentinum also, and can be accepted, even though one considers the transubstantiation as "sophistry" and the doctrine of Ubiquity as a mere helping hypothesis. One must only see to it that the identity of the incarnate Jesus Christ with the bread and wine in the Supper is not given up.<sup>130</sup>

Hardt

To clarify Luther's concept of substance, Hardt gives a detailed historical treatment of that idea, showing where Luther has inherited material and where not. Starting with Platonic philosophy, opening the

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<sup>128</sup>Ibid., XXXIX, 94, 98.

<sup>129</sup>Aalen, Ord og Sakrament, p. 257, referring to R. Prenter, "Die Realpräsenz als die Mitte der christlichen Gottesdienst," Gedenkschrift für D. Werner Elert, edited by Fr. Hübner (Berlin: Lutherisches Verlagshaus, 1955), p. 308, claiming the orthodox tradition from e.g. J. Gerhard.

<sup>130</sup>Ibid., pp. 257-258, referring Sol. Decl. VII, 38, BS 984.



possibility to spiritualize those Biblical concepts which seemed harsh and abhorrent, he moves on to Augustine's symbolic view. Unlike later Augustinianism, which distinguished between the heavenly and the Eucharistic Christ's body, Augustine himself did not deny the presence of Christ in the sacrament in the modern sense, although he used the term "sign." Christ's objective presence in the Supper was really first denied by Berengar of Tours. He held a concrete and visual presence of the Lord was necessary for a doctrine of a real and true presence. Being forced to conform with church doctrine, he proposed the formulations of transformation of the substance, what he originally had opposed. He thus introduced the terms "substance" and "accidents" into the Eucharistic terminology.<sup>131</sup>

The position of Thomas also needs clarification. He opposed any theory of coexistence between body and host, as well as any local movement from Christ's place in heaven to the sacrament. Therefore an illocal change of substance, that would not imply physical absurdities, was necessary. Thomas' concept of substance is thus illocal and non-physical. He only refers to the presence as formae et spirituales substantiae, leaving no spatial definition of Christ's body secundum se, Thomas is therefore not at all materialistic in his thinking.<sup>132</sup> While Bonaventura also rejected a coexistence, he, as later Duns Scotus, did not hold the transubstantiation to be logically necessary. He rather spoke of a presence sacramentaliter, which was miraculous.

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<sup>131</sup>Hardt, Venerabilis, pp. 10-12.

<sup>132</sup>Ibid., p. 14, referring to Summa Theologiae III, q. 76, a.1, ad 3: "per modum substantiae et non per modum quantitatis," refuting the Platonic "per modum ideae."



William of Ockham, on the contrary, expanded the concept of movement, without dissolving locality, and held to the physical coexistence of Christ's body and the host. The presence was not to be relegated to an indefinite omnipresence, and although it could not be measured by quantity, the two, substance and quantity, could not be separated. For Thomistic thinking, Ockham must have seemed abhorrently massive. Yet, he is not completely consequent. He defines substance as material, and quantity as expressing something spatial. The substance is then present in the sacrament in such a manner that its material side, supernaturally, is totally present in the host. Quantity is for Ockham not an ontological entity.<sup>133</sup>

Hardt points to Luther's strong indebtedness to Ockham's terminology on substance and movement, both in De Captivitate Babylonica and later against Carlstadt in Wider die himmlischen Propheten. His arguments would imply that "The omnipresence of Christ's concrete body in the round oblate is a miracle to be received by the same faith as believers in the many miracles of existence."<sup>134</sup> Luther thus ends up in philosophical disharmony, compelled by his Scriptural and Cristological stand. He held to full identity between the Eucharistic and the heavenly body of Christ. "Christ is a physical reality both in heaven after the resurrection and ascension, in the sacrament and in the hearts of the believers."<sup>135</sup> Significant is Luther's concrete concept as expressed in his phrase "the

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<sup>133</sup>Ibid., pp. 17-20, 79; on nominalistic background, supra, pp. 19-20.

<sup>134</sup>Ibid., p. 25.

<sup>135</sup>Ibid., p. 27.



large bones are to be hidden there";<sup>136</sup> yet Christ is not bound to visibility. He may choose his form of revelation, without losing the present physical reality. Christ's body thus stands in a supernatural relation to the material world, also in the sacrament.

Hardt divides the scholars, viewing Luther's stand on the transubstantiation, into three groups:<sup>137</sup>

1. Luther regarded it as a theologoumenon, non really combatting it (R. Holte, J. Diestelmann, E. Sommerlath);
2. More critical view, because of Biblical evidence, especially 1 Cor. 10:16, yet not regarding it as heresy, rather a wrong explanation (H. Sasse, C. Fr. Wisløff);
3. Luther regarded it as an ungodly heresy and came to a total break with it (for example, V. Vajta).

Hardt first observes that the term transformation, which was used throughout Luther's life, did not specifically express the transubstantiation. In his Sermon on the Sacrament of 1519, Luther criticized the scholastic subtleties, but not, as Sasse holds, the transubstantiation itself.<sup>138</sup> First in the writing to the German Nobility in 1520, he attacked it to a certain degree, by defending the Bohemian position. Yet he did not himself reject it, but rather presented a broad attack on the Aristotelian philosophy and upheld the Bohemian's right to criticism. Thus it had at least ceased to be a binding dogma for him.

In De Captivitate Babylonica Luther proceeded to a contextual critique, by the impulse of Pierre d'Ailly's nominalistic consubstantiation.

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<sup>136</sup>Ibid., p. 37.

<sup>137</sup>Ibid., p. 117.

<sup>138</sup>Ibid., pp. 118-119, only a critique of the wo, but not of the ob. Luther maintained the expressions verwandeln and wandeln.



However, also here it is no more than an occasion for thought, an intellectual stimulant.

Luther still considers both his own opinion and that of his opponents as within the possible theologoumena of the same church . . . [and] holds to the possibility of peaceful coexistence of both conceptions of the reality of the bread-substance after the consecration.<sup>139</sup>

Luther always held open the option that God could work the miracle of transubstantiation, but that he actually does so is something we cannot be forced to believe. In his answer to King Henry VIII's attack on him, Luther rules out the transubstantiation as a possible explanation, because of Paul's testimony. He also labels it a "mistake,"<sup>140</sup> nevertheless regards it as an expression of the faith in the Real Presence. Henry VIII had rightly observed the implication of Luther's teaching that Christ's body not only is in the bread, but that the bread in fact is Christ's body.<sup>141</sup> A unity had been created, one of hypostatical character.

In his great Confession of 1528, Luther denies the legitimacy of the "identity of predicates,"<sup>142</sup> and does not regard the transubstantiation as principally a theologoumenon. "This writing stresses, however, that transubstantiation must be evaluated positively in contrast to the

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<sup>139</sup> Ibid., p. 122.

<sup>140</sup> Ibid., p. 124; cf. WA XI, 441: "yrthum," and WA Br IX, 3629, A 58: "yrrig."

<sup>141</sup> Ibid., p. 132.

<sup>142</sup> Ibid., p. 133, WA XXVI, 439 "praedicatio identica de diversis naturis" is impossible. Cf. WA XXVI, 445 on expressions as leibsbrod (or fleischbrod) and Blutswien, to express the hypostatical union.



Enthusiasts' denial of the Real Presence."<sup>143</sup> In spite of the lack of Biblical support, it is not at all abhorrent to him. This is not to say, as Vajta does, that Luther's teaching is a via media between Roman materialism and Enthusiastic spiritualism.<sup>144</sup>

Melanchthon criticizes the transubstantiation as materialistic, and thus does not strike the Thomistic doctrine. He also stands in opposition to the nominalistic stress of a unique existence of Christ's body, which is really a more materialistic understanding. This separates him from Luther.<sup>145</sup>

Hardt's stress is that when taken as an article of faith, Luther rejects the transubstantiation, but is otherwise very cautious so as not to be considered a denier of the Real Presence. Luther's concern for the lay people led him to present it at times as a praiseworthy attempt to explain the miracle. It is worth noticing that he never in his sermons, which otherwise are rich on doctrinal decisions about controversial topics, attacks the transformation of the substance. He was in fact happy to observe the folk-piety surrounding the miracle of the Presence.<sup>146</sup> Hardt thus holds that Sasse's and Wislöff's evaluation of Luther on this topic to have the best support in the sources.

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<sup>143</sup>Ibid., p. 124, WA XXVI, 462: "Und ehe ich mit den schwermern wolt eytel wein haben, so wolt ich ehe mit dem Papsts eytel blut halten."

<sup>144</sup>Ibid., p. 125.

<sup>145</sup>Ibid., p. 145. Melanchthon's fear of "bread-worship" is not that of Luther, infra, pp. 131-133.

<sup>146</sup>Ibid., pp. 126-128. According to his last remarks in 1545, Luther principally rejected the transubstantiation as theologoumenon, because of its un-Scriptural character, and therefore regarded it as heresy, as far as it was considered a dogma; cf. WA LIV, 425-426, 430-431.



The bread is not only a shape, a substance or an accident, under which Christ's humanity is hidden: it is Christ's body through "Einbrödtunge," similar to that of the "incarnation" . . . The host has in a completely new manner become the bearer of a divine predicate.<sup>147</sup>

The Christological parallel was to his opponents at Sorbonne, to J. Eck and to Henry VIII nothing short of blasphemous. This was the ultimate consequence of the "is," as well as the "this."

The other party of critics, Honius and Oecolampadius, characterized Luther's doctrine as consubstantiation and impanation, and considered him more absurd than the Romanists.<sup>148</sup> Hardt claims Bucer is to blame for the notion that Lutherans taught consubstantiation, at least when understood as a local inclusion. For him the papistic ungodliness was seen in (1) a union of bread and Christ's body, which was locally understood; (2) a coarse Capernaitic eating of Christ's body, which was physically consumed; and (3) an automatic salvatory effect of the sacrament merely through its consumption.<sup>149</sup> Although Bucer exempts Luther from Rome's position, implying that he sought a more spiritual understanding, he nevertheless accused Luther in Wittenberg in 1536 of coordinating transubstantiation and local inclusion. This is a crude misunderstanding, according to Hardt. The first two points strike Luther more than the Roman Church, he was the more concrete of the two. Thus Lutherans were accused of teaching consubstantiation, not by the Roman Catholics, but by the Reformed.

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<sup>147</sup> Ibid., p. 138, quoting WA XXVI, 434.

<sup>148</sup> Ibid., p. 141.

<sup>149</sup> Ibid., pp. 151-153.



Within the Lutheran groups also there were those who followed Melancthon's attitude rather than Luther's. Most emphatically is this rejection of the transubstantiation refound in Brenz. Also he rejects de facto Luther's concrete sacramental belief. He struggles against the materialism in all forms known to him. No state of union between the two entities in the sacrament therefore seems to exist in Brenz' theology.

Chemnitz on the other hand, admits a real transformation in the sacrament. The mutatio "consists in the fact that what previously was only bread and wine after the consecration really is Christ's body and blood." He does not adhere to the scholastic transubstantiation, but refrains from disputing it as well. "Chemnitz thus explicitly and consciously goes back to Luther's moderate view on this point," upholding Luther's hoc as well as the est.<sup>150</sup>

Hardt observes that Luther, in fact, disliked the use of prepositions such as in, with and under, holding that they easily could give an unrealistic connotation.<sup>151</sup> The Lutheran Confessions also stress that this is a secondary terminology, and must be related to the "is."

In the Apology to the Formula of Concord, the local inclusion and the unification to one essence or substance are placed together. This coincides with the term consubstantiation, yet there is a terminological problem here, when one implies a union merely according to physical laws.

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<sup>150</sup>Ibid., pp. 148-149, Chemnitz' critical attitude toward "Berengar's Confession," opposite to Luther's attitude, implies a historically different judgment, but not necessarily a dogmatic one.

<sup>151</sup>Hardt, Om Altarets, p. 45, referring to WA XXVI, 447.



L. Petri, for example, used extremely concrete language to express the union. Hardt's conclusion is that

The term consubstantiation lacks a fixed content, since no theologian has ever positively developed it. According to what definition one then decides to give the term, one can say that Luther taught, respectively, did not teach, the consubstantiation.<sup>152</sup>

Nevertheless there is, according to Hardt a positive aspect:

when the term consubstantiation is experienced as related to a concrete realistic notion of presence . . . [then] Luther's doctrine on the Supper both can and ought to be named "consubstantiation," and the disputing of this expression is rejected as dictated by false and spiritualistic definitions of the mode of sacramental presence in Luther.<sup>153</sup>

Luther's position to the concomitance-doctrine is also debated at great length. To Hardt it proposes no more than the fact that Christ exists as totus Christi in heaven, and that an indissoluble identity exists between the heavenly Christ and the substance of the Eucharistic Christ's body, so that the latter is found in the former. Hardt disagrees with those scholars who hold that Luther principally accepted the totus Christi concept and therefore criticized the concomitance only because of its scholastic speculations used in defense of sub una.<sup>154</sup> Admittedly Luther did hold that the sacrament, given sub una, gives the whole Christ, and yet he agreed with the criticism of the Bohemians who rejected the concomitance.

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<sup>152</sup>Hardt, Venerabilis, pp. 149-150.

<sup>153</sup>Ibid., p. 156.

<sup>154</sup>Ibid., pp. 198-201, opposing scholars such as Sasse, Vajta, Wislöff, and A. Peters, although differing.



The important observation is that Luther objected to stating that Christ's divinity is contained in the sacrament. The godhead cannot be conjured into the bread and wine. In his polemic against the Bishop of Meissen, Luther deduced from the concomitantia naturalis, that is the full presence of the godhead in the natural elements, that when paired with the concept of Christ's omnipresence, the ultimate result would be that the Bishop of Meissen, with all his vestments would also be eaten at every celebration.<sup>155</sup> This polemical statement strikes at the very heart of the Thomistic attempt to present its doctrine as a meaningful, separate dogma, implying something beyond the basic Christological data.

Hardt holds that there is no principal connection between concomitantia and sub una. The concomitance implies a concrete grasping of the godhead, which goes beyond the doctrine of incarnation. Thus it is to be rejected.<sup>156</sup>

The presence in the sacrament is . . . not repletive, but definitive and encloses only those things that have taken this form of presence through the consecration.<sup>157</sup>

#### Summary

All three contributors, Sasse, Aalen, and Hardt, stress the Christological basis for the Lutheran Real Presence. Likewise, the Cyrilian Christology and Chalcedon are pointed to as decisive. They all stress

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<sup>155</sup>Ibid., pp. 206-207, referring to WA XXVI, 605. The Ockhamistic school rejects the Thomistic notion of localizing the godhead, and ascribes to the term merely the personal unity, inscrutable for human mind, cf. p. 200.

<sup>156</sup>Hardt, Om Altarets, p. 64.

<sup>157</sup>Hardt, Venerabilis, p. 207.



the parallel of the incarnation to the "miracle" of the Supper. Hardt takes the full consequence and seems almost to identify the two occurrences, not stressing as much as Sasse, the supernatural mode of presence. Yet, when discussing the Ockhamistic terms of presence, Hardt stresses the repletive almost to the exclusion of the definitive/circumscriptive. The repletive presence is exactly what makes possible the concrete presence. Thus he makes the omnipresence compelling for the Real Presence to a greater degree than the other two, who both regard the ubiquity merely as a theory, a helping-hypothesis. Aalen concludes that the Lutheran Church does not teach omnipresence beyond that of the multi-(or ubi-)volopresence of the Formula of Concord.

Concerning the Words of Institution, all agree on the fundamental character of them, and that the Lutheran exegesis still has validity. Aalen points to the dogmatically crucial consideration that if modern exegesis can undermine the previous literal understanding of the apostolic tradition, then the Church has arrived at an identity crisis. The integrity of the Christian Church is dependant on the literal interpretation. Hardt's emphasis is primarily on the effect of the words. They not only qualify in a vague sense, but actually effect a change, a miracle, they are consecratory, that is their primary function. Sasse and Aalen would not reject this, but would rather stress the Gospel-content in the words as intended for the people, rather than for the elements. Hardt stresses the dogmatic consequences of the word "this," to a greater extent than the others, who merely touch on it. Sasse would agree that the Lutheran accent is on the meaning of the words, and not on the mere recitation of them. But he stresses the inferiority of the element as materia over against the word as forma.



The "how" of the Real Presence brings out further divergencies. Hardt stands out as the more "materialistic" of the three. He asserts that criticism of the Roman transubstantiation-doctrine as materialistic, in fact, strikes Luther more than Rome. The Thomistic thinking is not materialistic, as the Ockhamistic could be designated. Luther follows the latter, criticizing the Aristotelian metaphysical structure of Thomism, but not the miracle effected in the Supper.

Aalen and Sasse regard the transubstantiation as un-Scriptural and therefore to be rejected, but they do not treat it seriously as heresy, rather as an unsuitable philosophical structure. All three stress Luther's leniency toward this doctrine, holding the Enthusiasts' symbolism to be the real heresy. Yet, Hardt maintains that Protestant critics who have regarded it as materialistic, in general have not understood the Lutheran conception. He also opens for the term consubstantiation, as suitable for Luther's teaching, when not limiting the two "substances" to a union merely according to physical laws.

While Aalen holds Luther to teach identity of predicates, and not of matter, Hardt stresses the opposite aspect. Admitting that Christ's presence is sacramental and not physical, he holds that the identity of predicates is used out of fear of too materialistic notions. Luther had no such fear. The fault of the concomitance, however, was that it transferred the totus Christus in heaven to earth. That is limiting the godhead.

Hardt seems to canonize Luther very strongly, at the expense of Melancthon. However, he disagrees with most other scholars in linking Chemnitz to the latter. He holds that Brenz and Andreae are



Melanchthonians, while no one carried Luther's teaching on as did Chemnitz. The Formula of Concord follows him. Aalen and Sasse differ on this, and hold to the somewhat more complex structure of that Confession.



### CHAPTER III

#### RECEPTION OF SALVATION

##### The Sacrament is the Gospel

Sasse

The sacraments, both Baptism and Lord's Supper, are not only symbols of what God does to us and in us, but God actually deals with us in and through them. They are not only illustrations of the Gospel, or a guarantee, but special modes of God's working, his word using earthly elements in order to present redemption to our whole person, body and soul. This is entirely incomprehensible to the world, and will always remain a mystery.<sup>1</sup>

Hermann Sasse claims that the New Testament does not have a sacramental concept of a "sign." He challenges the Heidelberg Catechism's expressions Pfand and Wahrzeichen, contending that they are used in rejecting the Real Presence. Zeichen must relate to Sache; only then is the term meaningful.<sup>2</sup>

Augustine formulated a universal concept of sacrament, as visible sign. Thomas created the term signum efficax. Melancthon, in his Loci,

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<sup>1</sup>Hermann Sasse, "Das heilige Abendmahl im Leben der Kirche," Kirchliche Zeitschrift, LXIII (1939), 516-517.

<sup>2</sup>H. Sasse, In Statu Confessionis (Berlin: Lutherisches Verlagshaus, c.1966), pp. 77-78. Cf. Luther's Large Catechism IV, 7, Die Bekenntnisschriften der evangelisch-Lutherischen Kirche (1930 edition; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1967), 692-694, on äusserlich Ding. Hereafter referred to as BS.



treated the sacraments under the heading De signi, yet the term signum is dropped in his last edition of the Loci. J. Gerhard characterized the sacrament not in genere signi, but rather in genere actionis.<sup>3</sup>

The Augustinian "sign" or "symbol," as carried on by the African Church, however, is not a mere sign, but filled with reality. Augustine placed all the emphasis on the invisible reality which underlies the visible sign, holding that "not outward signs, but solely the Spirit of God in His direct influence on man can bring salvation."<sup>4</sup>

Luther also uses this terminology:

this holy sacrament is naught else than a divine sign, in which Christ and all saints are pledged, granted and imparted, with all their works, sufferings, merits, and possessions, for the comfort and strengthening of all who are in anxiety and sorrow, and are persecuted by the devil, sin, the world, the flesh and every evil; and that to receive the sacrament is nothing else than to desire all this and firmly believe that it shall be done.<sup>5</sup>

Luther designates the sacrament as seal and sign, but never as limited to external bread or action. His stand is that one cannot believe the second part of the words of institution, "given and shed for you, for the remission of sins," without believing the first part, "This is my body," and "This is my blood." If the question were asked: Why not? his

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<sup>3</sup>H. Sasse, This is my Body (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, c.1959), pp. 25-26.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 29

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 112, quoting D. Martin Luthers Werke. Kritische Gesamtausgabe (Weimar: Hermann Böhlau, 1883), II, 749. Hereafter referred to as WA. Cf. E. Schlink Theology of the Lutheran Confessions (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, c.1961), pp. 167, 186, referring to Confessio Augustana, XIII, 1, BS 68; and Apol. XIII, 20, BS 295, on the sacrament as sign and testimony of God's will toward men.



answer would be: "I do not know. Christ said so. That must be sufficient."<sup>6</sup>

What distinguishes Luther from later theologians is his reluctance to put forward any theory about the necessity of the sacrament and how God works through it. The question why Christ instituted the sacraments in addition to His Gospel cannot be answered. . . . Why God has so many ways to give us forgiveness of sins, no man can know.<sup>7</sup>

In the Zwinglian controversy, Luther changed emphasis somewhat. There he tended to connect the forgiveness with the body and blood directly, instead of regarding these as mere signs and seals attached to the word. He claims that he who drinks the cup, thereby drinks the true blood, of Christ and all the gifts included in it, that is the Spirit of Christ and the forgiveness of sins. "Here not a mere figure or sign of the New Testament or of the blood of Christ is received, as it would befit the Jews in the Old Testament."<sup>8</sup>

However, Luther gives in somewhat in the fourth session of the Marburg Colloquy:

I admit the sacraments are sacred symbols and that as such they signify something which is beyond them and which transcends our intellect. . . . But to speak of a mere sign, that I cannot bear. There is a difference between natural signs and signs instituted by God.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 115, cf. WA VI, 359. Cf. Sasse, In Statu, p. 84.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., p. 181.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., quoting WA XXVI, 468.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., p. 263; cf. p. 113 on distinction between philosophical and theological sign, WA TR 5106.



Sasse notes that Augustana has labeled the sacraments "instruments" for the Spirit in his justifying work.<sup>10</sup> While Luther could not live without the sacrament, Melanchthon would have been able to do without it, like all humanists, had it not been for the ordinance of Christ. Although Melanchthon considered them as effectual signs, they nevertheless remained primarily as signs, their efficacy resting upon the will of God to accompany the signs with His grace.<sup>11</sup>

For Calvin, Sasse asserts, "the sacrament is not a means, but a sign, of grace," admitting that the body is offered to all, but holding that the unbeliever only receives bread and wine.<sup>12</sup> Calvin does not deny that the external sign affirms the divine promise, but he cannot admit that it actually gives this assurance.

After 1520, it is clear that Luther considered forgiveness of sins a real gift and fruit of the Lord's Supper. He opposed Thomas' distinction of mortal and venial sins, only granting forgiveness for the latter in the Supper. The New Testament of Christ is for Luther the Sacrament of the Altar; his discovery of the Gospel led to the discovery of the Supper.<sup>13</sup>

Sasse holds that even in the Church of Rome, where the Gospel has been forgotten or adulterated, a remnant remains in the "given and shed

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<sup>10</sup>Ibid., p. 283; cf. CA V, BS 58; cf. p. 318 on Augustana Variata, where the relationship between the means and the gifts are described by simul, i.e. independent.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., p. 315; Melanchthon uses the term pactum, for the efficacy of the sacrament; cf. Corpus Reformatorum, Philippi Melanchthonis Opera quae supersunt omnia, edited by C. G. Bretschneider (Halis Saxonum: C. A. Schwetschke et filium, 1834), II, 315. Hereafter referred to as CR.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., p. 328.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., p. 114; cf. p. 108.



for you for the forgiveness of sins." The mistake of the Roman Church has been that it has separated the Supper from the preaching of the Gospel. "Without the preaching, the Supper remains an unintelligible rite." The sacrificial character of the Roman mass compromises the Gospel; it becomes a synergistic act. "It violates the solus Christus."<sup>14</sup> Yet, the terms repraesentatio, memoria, and applicatio, of Tridentinum, may be used when one does not ascribe to them other Roman doctrinal decisions. The Supper is the representation of Christ's sacrifice and the real turning back to what is acquired by this sacrifice. Sasse claims that whenever the Supper is celebrated, man is given part in the salvation of this sacrifice. Therefore it is an actualization of the salvation, not only a promise. It is the fulfillment of salvation history.<sup>15</sup>

The Gospel-character comes from the words themselves. They are words of life and salvation. When the "for you" is the center of attention, there is no problem of relating Word to Sacrament. The first becomes a sacramentum audibile, while the latter becomes a verbum visibile. The same grace is given in different forms. God comes not as Deus nudus, but covered by his "means."<sup>16</sup> Sasse further holds that

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<sup>14</sup>H. Sasse, "Zum lutherischen Verständnis der Konsekration," Briefe XXVI (1952) (Xerox copy), p. 6: "Das Abendmahl ist ein Bestandteil des Evangeliums, das Evangelium der Inhalt des Abendmahls." Cf. p. 10; cf. Sasse, "Das heilige Abendmahl Kirchliche Zeitschrift, LXIII, 522.

<sup>15</sup>H. Sasse, Vom Sakrament des Altars (Leipzig: Verlag Dörffling & Franke, 1941), pp. 69-71.

<sup>16</sup>Sasse, This is, p. 374; cf. Apol. XIII, 5, BS 292-293, "ein sichtlich Wort." Cf. Sasse, In Statu, p. 83.



the doctrines of justification and of the Real Presence are the two foci of the elipse that symbolizes the teaching and the life of the Church of the Augsburg Confession. . . . the whole comfort and consolation which the Gospel can give to us poor miserable sinners is inseparably bound up in both . . . in the Holy Communion we receive the very means through which Our Lord secured for us the salvation that our justifying faith embraces.<sup>17</sup>

The matter at stake for Luther, was the root of our communion with God, which cannot be separated from the Lord's Supper and its gift. The participation of the elements give koinonia with his body and blood. The controversy was a real contentio de fide.<sup>18</sup> With the words of institution the prophetic ministry of Jesus was completed, and the highpriestly ministry began. The fruit of this ministry is distributed in the Supper; there it becomes a reality. This is to a Reformed mind unthinkable, as it would be looking behind the veil of God's predestination. Therefore faith in the Real Presence is related to justification, to faith in the Gospel.<sup>19</sup>

Sasse claims that the New Testament testifies to the unity of the Gospel and the Lord's Supper. The proclamation of the message should be accompanied by the celebration of the Lord's death. The Gospel is more than a religious message, and the sacrament is more than a religious ceremony, both giving the same gift, namely the forgiveness of sins.

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<sup>17</sup> H. Sasse, "Liturgy and Lutheranism," Una Sancta VIII, No. 3 (1948), 14-15.

<sup>18</sup> H. Sasse, "A Lutheran Contribution to the Present Discussion on the Lord's Supper," Concordia Theological Monthly, XXX (1959), 28; cf. Sasse, Vom Sakrament, p. 52.

<sup>19</sup> Sasse, Vom Sakrament, p. 191; Sasse, This is, p. 109 referring to WA XI, 432: "Denn sie die Summa sind des ganzen Evangelii," and WA XI, 442: "denn dies Sakrament ist das Evangelium."



Each misunderstanding of the Gospel must lead to a misunderstanding of the sacrament, and where the sacrament is misunderstood, a wrong concept of the Gospel results. "Every disease of the Church becomes manifest at the Lord's Table."<sup>20</sup>

Luther's concept is clearly contrasted with that of Zwingli, whose understanding of the Gospel was not unrelated to the Supper. The sacraments are for Zwingli mere ordinances of Christ that we perform as Christians. They only signify the grace given outside of them.<sup>21</sup> His figurative interpretation of the words of institution, endangers the Gospel-words as well, that is the "given and shed for you." If these words also are figuratively interpreted, the proprium of the Supper is lost.<sup>22</sup>

The uniqueness of the sacrament is closely related to the historical setting, the institution. The consecration is also unique, as the baptismal water is not consecrated. The presence of Christ is different, and the validity of Baptism and the Lord's Supper differ, the first being recognized among most churches, while the latter is church-divisive. Sasse also claims that the preached word falls when the Gospel in the sacrament is undermined by denying the objective basis of the true, bodily presence of Christ. In the sacrament Christ is also present in his humanity, and what was sacrificed once is now given to be eaten. That is

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<sup>20</sup>Sasse, This is, p. 3; cf. pp. 1-2, WA VIII, 524, on the definition of the Gospel as forgiveness of sins.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., p. 282.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., p. 329, proprium: that which is unique and distinguishes the Supper from the other means of grace.



the secret of the Real Presence. Christ makes us contemporaneous with himself; however, any term such as "representation" endangers the "once and for all" of the atonement.<sup>23</sup> Opposing the Roman contention of an unbloody repetition, Sasse holds that the presence is not that of an event or action, but of a person, of Christ's body and blood.<sup>24</sup>

Sasse holds that the decay of confession and absolution has always been accompanied by the decay of the Sacrament of the Altar. The Church experiences a world without sense of sin and guilt, and the comfort of modern Protestantism is that there is no hell, no condemnation, no wrath of God. In this situation it is necessary to stress that to seek God is always to seek a gracious God, and not to engage in some philosophical, metaphysical quest.<sup>25</sup>

The bodily aspect of the sacrament needs to be stressed:

The idea that the sacrament is meant for the whole man, body and soul, is rather one of the fundamental elements of Luther's doctrine on the sacrament. . . . It is closely connected with the doctrine on incarnation.<sup>26</sup>

There is also an eschatological aspect of the Supper. At every celebration there is an anticipation of what one day will come; a miracle relating a coming miracle, including the bodily dimension. Sasse stresses, with E. Sommerlath and W. Elert, this concept of wholeness

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<sup>23</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 371-372, 380; Sasse, *In Statu*, pp. 80-81, 88; cf. Sasse, "Abendmahlkonsensus mit Rom?", *Lutherische Blätter*, XXII, No. 100 (1970), 58.

<sup>24</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 381; cf. *Catechismus Romanus*, Pars. II, cap.4, q. 61 on "unbloody repetition."

<sup>25</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 383-384.

<sup>26</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 184, WA XXIII, 244. Cf. pp. 389, 186, on the eschatological character of Jesus' healings, as a parallel to our bodies as "members of Christ," and "temples of the Holy Spirit."



of communion, and the anticipating character of a complete union with Christ. This eschatological character is not limited to a hope, but the celebration of Christ's Real Presence includes a fulfillment of the expectation. Time-barriers are broken; heaven and earth are united.<sup>27</sup>

There is also a close connection between the sacrament and the resurrection. We partake of the "vivifying flesh of our glorified and resurrected Lord." Thus the aspect of "remembrance" always points forward, as exemplified in the greeting "Marana tha."<sup>28</sup>

Sasse holds that Luther's understanding of the New Testament is an evangelical translation of the Catholic idea of the Eucharist as nourishment, refreshment and means of strengthening the inner life in its fight against sin. The idea of the sacrament as medicine is retained, as also the Formula of Concord characterizes the body and blood of Christ as vivificus cibus.<sup>29</sup> One may assert that the Word and Sacraments, as marks of the true Church, give assurance that it is the true Church, the body of Christ, because it gives the body of Christ to the celebrants. "This sacrament is cibus viatorum, food for the wayfarers, as our medieval fathers called it."<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>27</sup>Sasse, Vom Sakrament, p. 73.

<sup>28</sup>Sasse, This is, p. 399, cf. 1 Cor. 16:22, Didache 10:11; cf. p. 385.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid., pp. 182-183, Sol. Decl. VIII, 59, BS 1035; cf. Large Cat. V, 23, BS 712, and V, 69, BS 721.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid., p. 401; Sasse, Here We Stand (New York: Harper & Brothers, c.1938), pp. 126-128; Sasse, "Das heilige Abendmahl," Kirchliche Zeitschrift LXIII, 519; Sasse, Vom Sakrament, p. 74, comparing the "Manna" to Israel with the food of the sacrament; cf. Smalc. Art. III, 8, 10, BS 455-456.



The New Covenant, celebrated by the disciples, constituted the new people of God; they were the foundation of the Church. Participation in the meal is an expression of the Church as a member of Christ, as his body. Sasse observes that Paul has a double usage of the term "body of Christ," speaking both of the Church and the Lord's Supper. Both are real. This one bread binds the Church to Christ's body.<sup>31</sup> The Church not only resembles the body, but is the body of Christ. The Supper in fact constitutes the Corpus Christi Mysticum. Sasse stresses the influence of the meal. Without the Eucharist, the Church would have ceased to be a church. "Where the true body of our Lord is received in the Sacrament, it does not remain without impact on the world."<sup>32</sup>

Luther's idea of the reality of the corpus Christi mysticum is inseparably connected with his understanding of the reality of the corpus Christi sacramentale.<sup>33</sup>

Sasse makes an interesting comparison between the expressions Corpus Christi sacramentale and Corpus Christi mysticum. They must be distinguished, the one being Christ's body in the Supper, and the other his body, the Church. Therefore, as we have communion with his blood, so we also have communion with his other members. This realistic understanding is unique for Lutheranism, as both Zwingli and the Roman Church regarded the latter as figurative.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Sasse, Vom Sakrament, pp. 75-76.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., p. 77; cf. pp. 68, 137.

<sup>33</sup> Sasse, This is, p. 112.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., pp. 390-391, cf. passages Rom. 12:5, 1 Cor. 6:15, 10:16.



As we are baptized into one body, so we are kept in that unity through the participation of the sacramental body and blood. Therefore, the understanding of the Sacrament of the Altar is constitutive for the understanding of the Church.<sup>35</sup>

Aalen

Aalen strongly stresses that evangelical Lutheranism is distinguished from both Roman sacramentalism and Reformed spiritualism, by its "immanent" theology. Both the other two seek a unification of man's spirit with the transcendent God. Lutheranism stresses the incarnation, and the immanent instruments which the Spirit works through. He rejects K. Barth's relegation of the immanent means to a secondary place, transcendentalizing God almost beyond reach.<sup>36</sup>

The reality of Jesus' appearance on earth is continued in the preached Gospel and the sacramental actions in which he is present as the "head" of his Church. In both cases, Christ is present in a real form in and by the administration of the means of grace. The theological significance of the sanctorum communio of Apostolicum III, is not primarily the human relationships, but that of man with God through the given means.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>35</sup>Ibid., p. 392, cf. Eph. 4:4-5; cf. p. 394, Sasse suggests that the ta hagia (communio sanctorum) signify the holy things, thereby the belief in the Real Presence.

<sup>36</sup>Leiv Aalen, "Supplement til Leiv Aalen: Dogmatisk Grunnriss" mimeographed unpublished lectures (Oslo: Menighetsfakultetet, 1967), pp. 67-68

<sup>37</sup>Leiv Aalen, Dogmatisk Grunnriss (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1965), p. 81, Aalen refers to W. Elert's thesis that sancta primarily stands for the Eucharistic elements. Whether he is correct or not, the theological significance is worth stressing.



In accordance with Augustana VII, Aalen stresses the administration of the means of grace as the foundation of the Church. The content of this is not a mere repetitious act of Biblical words and actions, but the application of the apostolic Gospel; the forgiveness of sins acquired by Christ is distributed through Word and Sacrament. Therefore the reception of salvation stands and falls by this very application of God's grace. The proclamation is fundamental, but the entrance to the state of grace occurs through Baptism, and the Supper is a continuous affirmation of this state.<sup>38</sup> The proclaimed Gospel appears as a personal application in the sacrament.

Speaking generally of the sacrament, Aalen confirms the duality of sign and word, as Luther's Large Catechism treats the sacrament.<sup>39</sup> Both have the function of arousing and strengthening the faith. In his comprehensive dogmatic thesis on the content of the Supper, Aalen says that the hidden fellowship with the crucified and risen Christ, which is given by the eating and drinking, serves the faith by ever new mediation of the forgiving grace, and to a specially intimate life in the new humanity as his corpus mysticum.<sup>40</sup> The repetitious character of the Supper, serves this intimate fellowship, and is not only vertically oriented but also

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<sup>38</sup>Ibid., p. 94, referring to Large Cat. V, 23-24, BS 712; cf. WA XVIII, 205.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid., p. 97, referring to Large Cat. IV, 29, BS 696; Apol. XIII, 5, BS 292; CA XIII: "signa et testimonia voluntatis Dei erga nos, ad excitandam et confirmandam fidem in his, qui utuntur, proposita."

<sup>40</sup>Ibid., p. 99; cf. W. Elert, Der Christliche Glaube (Hamburg: Furche-Verlag, 1960), pp. 355, 380, on the Supper as giving immediate contact with the exalted, as well as the sacrificed, Christ's body.



horizontally, in the service of love for your neighbor. Jesus' example with the feet-washing, John 13, illustrates this. The disputes between Lutheran and Reformed have been onesided, only paying attention to the vertical aspect. The Reformed denial of the Real Presence made this inevitable.

The intimate relationship with Christ is expressed in John 6, which today, says Aalen, is recognized as having sacramental content of anti-gnostic character. The realism of the fellowship is expressed in the locus classicus of 1 Cor. 10:16, by the word koinonia, that is, communion with Christ's body and blood, mediated by bread and wine. By the partaking of Christ himself, his new glorified humanity is transmitted to us in a secret manner. Thus, it is legitimate to speak of a corpus mysticum.<sup>41</sup>

The gift of the sacrament as being Christ himself, as it is presented in the Arnoldshain Theses, is no sincere expression for the real mediation of Christ, but, judged from the various interpretations, a mere meaningless compromise. Aalen, in fact, holds Gollwitzer's position to be based on the Augustinian verbum visibile, as the quintessence of the sacrament, and that he really operates merely with a spiritual presence as that of Calvin.<sup>42</sup>

The Lord's Supper therefore has a place in the life of a Christian as his covenant- and fellowship-meal. While the preached Gospel primarily is the "calling grace," the sacramental meal is the direct application of the

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<sup>41</sup>Ibid., p. 100, cf. Eph. 1:22, 4:15; Col. 1:18.

<sup>42</sup>Ibid., p. 101; Leiv Aalen, "Der Kampf um das Evangelium im Abendmahl," Theologische Literaturzeitung, XCI (1966), 88; cf. supra pp. 45, 50, on Gollwitzer's position.



grace on the individual. Aalen here stresses the place and function also of the absolution. The Supper is a cibus viatorum, a help in temptation and desperation over sins. In a sense one may, with E. Schlink, label the whole life of a Christian as a "life between the sacraments," a daily "hastening back to Baptism" and a "hastening forward to the Supper."<sup>43</sup>

The diversity of the means is only to be referred to God's richness, giving out the same grace in various ways. Yet, Aalen holds that no general sacramental concept is suitable to bring out the significance of each one. One has to treat them independently in their own historical setting, and in their function in the Christian's life. Each sacrament has its own proprium. However, Aalen almost consistently treats the sacraments as the presuppositions for acquiring faith, as the objective basis of mediating the grace. He distinguishes between a "seeking faith" and an "acquired faith," the first effected by the preached Gospel, the latter by the sacrament.<sup>44</sup>

Aalen's characteristic vocabulary on this point is clearest seen in his treatment of Baptism and justification.

Justification and regeneration can be said "objectively" to be attached to Baptism, and "subjectively" to the faith, but the state of grace thus constituted through Baptism

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<sup>43</sup>Ibid.,; cf. Schlink, pp. 180-181.

<sup>44</sup>Ibid., p. 113, cf. CA V; cf. B. T. Oftestad, "Nådemidlet og troen," Ung Teologi No. 2 (1969), 41, to critique of Aalen's proprium-concept in general.



by faith, must constantly be renewed by the continuous use of Word and Sacrament.<sup>45</sup>

He takes pains to stress the basis of extra nos for the faith, also in its struggle for survival. That liberates it from synergistic speculations. Therefore the repetitious character of the Supper and absolution is a sign of the Christian's need for new forgiveness and grace, which is mediated through these means. Our state of grace is therefore not dependant on our spiritual "temperature," but on the constant movement from Baptism to the Supper in daily repentance. This constant renewal and nourishment through the Supper, is given by the secret contact with Christ's holy body and blood. As the forgiveness is, in a sum, the content of justification, one readily will have to admit the constitutive factor of the means transmitting it.<sup>46</sup>

As the mediation of the salvatory gifts are attached to the objective means of grace, it is possible and proper to use the classical thesis: extra ecclesiam nulla salus. The Christian fellowship has its center in the Holy Communion, as the highest expression of the personal relationship with God and fellow believers, and as an inspiration to a life in service.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>45</sup>Ibid., p. 116; cf. p. 97 on Barth's evaluation of Baptism as cognitive, as opposed to Lutheranism's causative.

<sup>46</sup>Ibid., p. 117, the state of awakening is a subjective description, tending to compromise the objective character of the sacraments. Aalen compliments the Missouri Synod for holding to a strict monergistic understanding of the sacramental gift, without taking up the sacrificial aspect as R. Prenter does; cf. Aalen, "Supplement," pp. 65-66; cf. Leiv Aalen, "Evangeliet of Nådemidlene," Tidsskrift for Teologi og Kirke, X VIII (1947), 50.

<sup>47</sup>Aalen, "Supplement," pp. 73, 73b; cf. Elert, p. 388, on koinonia.



By relating the Spirit's work to the outward means, Lutheranism refutes subjectivism.<sup>48</sup> The "where and when it pleases God" of Augustana V, is not an uncertain, relative phrase, but asserts that the Spirit always accompanies the means, working either faith or unbelief, working only where and when God's means are used.<sup>49</sup>

In his effort to define the proprium of the Supper, Aalen claims that the only difference from the Word, is that Christ's body is mediated bodily, his glorified body coming to us under bread and wine. To negate this fact is to deny the miracle of the incarnation. The Supper has, therefore, the same function of strengthening and creating faith as the absolution. The "truly present and distributed to the communicants" of Augustana X, is therefore the content of the proprium. It is a bodily transmission of the same presence which exists in the Word. In essence there should be no contradiction between spiritual and Real Presence. The element is a help for the believer, an additional means of presence.<sup>50</sup> Thus only the outward form seems stressed as the proprium.

When treating the Sacrament of the Altar as a means of grace, it is important to stress the Lutheran understanding of grace as that of forgiveness and not transformation, as held by both Roman and Reformed theology. Luther distinguished between favor and donum, the first being the

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<sup>48</sup> Leiv Aalen, Ord og Sakrament (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, c.1966), p. 71, CA V: "ubi et quando visum est Deo"; the reformed position is actually determined by Augustine's spiritualism rather than Calvin's predestination.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., p. 76; cf. supra p. 18.

<sup>50</sup> Aalen, "Der Kampf," Theologische Literaturzeitung, XCI, 93; cf. Leiv Aalen, "Nyprotestantisk Økumenisme," Tidsskrift for Teologi og Kirke, XLIII (1972), 94, commenting on Marburg Revisited.



fundamental attitude of God in his justifying work. Grace in its proper sense is God's forgiving mercy, his favor and misericordia toward the sinner. As this is the main gift of the Lord's Supper and connected to the real mediation of his body, Aalen expresses his discontentment with the Arnoldshain Theses, where "in reality the question of the proprium of the Lord's Supper is left open."<sup>51</sup>

Genuine evangelical faith holds on to the fact that in the Lord's Supper we encounter that body which was "put to death for our trespasses and raised for our justification." By the power of Christ's institution this is a constant new occurrence, and serves as the most real, not material, pledge of the one great gift of the Gospel, the forgiveness of sins.<sup>52</sup>

Thus the Lutheran concept of justification, as the application on the individual of the gifts of the Gospel, is really at stake in modern Protestantism. Justification is not a mere message, but the application of it. Aalen sees this aspect highly endangered in unionistic attempts such as that of Leuenberg, where the objective structure of justification is diminished, and not distinguished from the message as such.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>51</sup>Aalen, Ord og Sakrament, pp. 133-134, WA VIII, 106; cf. C. Fr. Wisløff, The Gift of Communion (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, c.1964), p. 134, holding that Luther considered the body on the altar donum not hostia, cf. Aalen, Ord og Sakrament, p. 247.

<sup>52</sup>Ibid., p. 256, Rom. 4:25; cf. R. Prenter, Skabelse og Genløsning (Copenhagen: G. E. C. Gads Forlag, 1971), p. 551, the forgiveness of Golgotha now present.

<sup>53</sup>Leiv Aalen, "Unionistisk kirke- og teologipolitikk." Tidsskrift for Teologi og Kirke, XLIV (1973, 252-253, cf. Gal. 3:26-27, CA IV, V, IX, on justification as the effect of the message by the means.



The proprium of the Supper may therefore be summed up as

Christ here present, giving himself as true God and true man, so that the mere eating and drinking of the consecrated elements (cf. Formula of Concord, Sol. Decl. VII, 79ff) give a real participation in the "substance" of the body and blood of Jesus, even though we cannot define more precisely how it happens.<sup>54</sup>

The koinonia with Christ's body is the source of faith and strength for the believer in his daily struggle.

Hardt

We made it plain in our introduction that the topic of our present chapter has so far not been a major issue for Hardt. Yet, we may extract some relevant tendencies from his treatment of the Christology and the function in the Church.

Hardt observes that the frequent reference to Word and Sacrament often contains a danger, because one does not know how to use them. He challenges the satisfaction of those who urge ritual forms as an end in themselves. "Sacramental religion enthuses far too many," and the content as means of grace is often lost.<sup>55</sup> In a comment on the efforts of a woman minister in a high-church movement, he sarcastically remarks that

Over a theology, which denies essential parts of the Christian revelation, and a preaching of a Father-Mother-God, the red sanctuary-lamp spreads its warm rays, and the frequency of the Holy Communion is high and good.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>54</sup>Aalen, Ord og Sakrament, p. 257.

<sup>55</sup>Tom Hardt, Om Altarets Sakrament (Uppsala: Bokförlaget Pro Veritate, c.1973), pp. 82-83.

<sup>56</sup>Ibid., p. 83.



Hardt points to the gnostic, colorful and impressive cults as a parallel, and warns against the dangers of syncretism.

Luther broke with the papal church on this point, where it presented the means of grace in an outward framework of beauty and mysticism. The medieval theology presented the monstrum incertitudinis, that is an uncertainty whether forgiveness actually was achieved. Luther's outwardness is therefore a critique against all human activity, and assurance based on one's own contrition and penance. With Luther, Hardt therefore stresses that

Forgiveness is now given and becomes our own only and merely through the words "given and shed for you." Because in them you have two things, namely that it is Christ's body and blood, and that it is your own as a treasure given to you.<sup>57</sup>

One may therefore hold that the food transforms him who eats it unto itself, and makes him like itself, spiritual, living, and eternal.<sup>58</sup>

The result of the Reformation is an invitation to frequent usage.

The sacrament is

an altogether healthy and trustworthy remedy, which helps you and gives you life, both for body and soul. Because where the soul has been healed, there the body has also received help. Why do we then consider it as if it was a poisonous thing, by which one would eat oneself to death.<sup>59</sup>

As to the outward character of the sacrament, Hardt claims that for Luther the unique mode of sacramental presence, its physical externity, had a meaning, namely that of being a sign and seal of the reality of

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<sup>57</sup>Ibid., p. 86, cf. pp. 83-85.

<sup>58</sup>Ibid., p. 86, referring to WA XXIII, 203.

<sup>59</sup>Ibid., p. 87, quoting WA XXX, i, 230.



forgiveness of sins, applied individually on the communicant. The proprium is therefore connected to the outward form, the direct individual application of the same grace as given in the Gospel, the forgiveness of sins.<sup>60</sup>

In his endeavor to clear up his standpoint, Melanchthon used the term "covenant,"<sup>61</sup> Reacting against a Creator-word concept, Melanchthon rather saw in the words of institution the basis for the sacramental concretion of the omnipresence, with the aim of comforting the believer. "The words here have a real impact, identical with that of the Gospel," thereby not excluding the objective element, of the sacramental presence, in this subjective definition.

For Luther, the Eucharistic presence stands out as unique. It cannot, as Baptism be described as effective, rather it is said to be metaphysice and materialiter, a static, resting and removable presence, bound by a physical medium of revelation, which is a seal of a real unique existence. "The Sacrament of the Altar is the sacrament of presence more than the other means of grace."<sup>62</sup> Thereby is not implied any special grace or quality, but merely indicated the unique mode of mediation.

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<sup>60</sup>Tom Hardt, Venerabilis & Adorabilis Eucharistia (Uppsala: Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis, c.1971), p. 146

<sup>61</sup>Ibid., p. 179, pactum, Melanchthon being provoked by Oecolampadius on this point in 1528.

<sup>62</sup>Ibid., p. 218, cf. pp. 216-217, 222.



## The Role of Faith

Sasse

The first sign of Luther's new understanding of the Sacrament of the Altar appears in his Sermon on Penitence of 1518. He there rejects that the sacrament is efficacious ex opere operato, that is, that it produces the effect unless the communicant obviates this effect.<sup>63</sup> Luther here also refers to the Augustinian phrase: "Not the sacrament, but the faith in the sacrament, justifies."<sup>64</sup> Faith is thus to precede the sacrament, not only accompany it. This is a heritage from Thomas, stressing that faith is required before any sacrament, that grace always precedes the sacrament.<sup>65</sup>

Sasse rejects the way modern Protestantism has been interpreting the "young Luther," as in fact denying the objectivity of the means of grace. "The sacraments do not create faith, they are rather accepted by faith and serve as acts of God, to assure the faithful of God's grace." This notion "expresses something which for Luther always remained a most important aspect."<sup>66</sup> This fundamental understanding must not be compromised by later expressions, where the objectivity is stressed. Luther's combat-situation determined his mode of expression.

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<sup>63</sup> Sasse, This is, p. 83, obic em ponere.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., "Non sacramentum, sed fides sacramenti iustificat," WA I, 324.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., referring to WA I, 286.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., p. 84, cf. supra, p. 65.



Sasse concedes that the early Luther stressed the spiritual communion with God to such an extent that the sub una would not destroy it. Where the reception of both species could not be practiced, God would still bestow his full blessing of the sacrament. He claimed that "faith in the spiritual is more needful than faith in the natural. For the natural without the spiritual profiteth us nothing in the sacrament."<sup>67</sup> Luther never denied the spiritual eating, as for example, related in John 6, but rejected that this excluded the bodily eating. The first is another expression for faith, and always has to accompany the latter.<sup>68</sup>

Luther's concept of faith was not like that of Thomas, namely the virtue of assent, holding as true an incomprehensible doctrine. Luther perceived of faith only as an attitude toward the Gospel itself, not toward a dogmatical statement that has to be accepted. He later stressed the forgiveness of sins as an actual gift and fruit of the sacramental eating. The Holy Communion thus becomes a gift for sinners only, and not for the righteous, because Christ came and gave his body for sinners. The sinner may therefore receive Christ's body with all the gifts it implies.<sup>69</sup>

Luther would not accept Zwingli's stand at Marburg, that "eating takes place, not where the words are spoken, but where they are believed," the words being efficacious only if they were accepted in faith.

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<sup>67</sup>Ibid., p. 113, quoting WA II, 751; p. 99, cf. WA XXVI, 495.

<sup>68</sup>Ibid., pp. 233, 236.

<sup>69</sup>Ibid., p. 114; cf. Elert, p. 386, promise and reception work in the Supper that which promise and faith effect by the Kerygma.



The eating of the body of Christ can be profitable because the promise of forgiveness of sins is connected with it. However, since every promise requires faith, and faith is a spiritual knowledge, therefore that bodily eating too, if it is done in faith, should be regarded as something spiritual.<sup>70</sup>

The objectivity of the sacrament's gift is therefore unconditional, but the reception of it is not automatic and unrelated to faith. The manducatio indignorum does not automatically imply an ad salutem.<sup>71</sup>

Sasse points to the extremely realistic language of Calvin in his Small Treatise on the Holy Supper of 1541:

We all confess, then, with one mouth that in receiving the sacrament in faith, according to the ordinance of the Lord, we are truly made partakers of the real substance of the body and blood of Jesus Christ. . . . on the one hand we must, to shut out all carnal fancies, raise our hearts on high to heaven, not thinking that our Lord Jesus Christ is so abased as to be enclosed under any corruptible elements. On the other hand, not to diminish the efficacy of this sacred mystery, we must hold that it is accomplished by the secret and miraculous virtue of God, and that the spirit of God is the bond of participation, for which reason it is called spiritual.<sup>72</sup>

Calvin's deviation is clear. His sursum corda, and stress on the Spirit as vehicle of the gift, disconnects, in fact, the sacramental gift from the concrete sacrament itself. The sacrament becomes a sign, not a means, of grace.

In spite of Luther's strong stress on manducatio indignorum, he denied that the true body and blood were present where the communicants

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<sup>70</sup>Ibid., p. 253, cf. p. 241.

<sup>71</sup>Ibid., p. 309, on Luther's discussion with Bucer on the distinction between impii and indigni.

<sup>72</sup>Ibid., p. 324, referring to CR (Calvin) V, 460.



did not wish to receive it.<sup>73</sup> That doctrine is a Christological principle, and its salvatory consequence is qualified by the assertion that only the worthy receive the body and blood of Christ unto salvation, the unworthy unto damnation.<sup>74</sup> From this follows the practice of the early Church, where only baptized members were given the Lord's Supper. Here we notice, however, that Sasse makes no distinction or qualification of the baptized, as to whether they have faith or not.

Luther's rejection of the Reformed celebration as legitimate according to Christ's institution, had far-reaching consequences. Sasse claims the question whether a Lutheran, in danger of death, could receive the sacrament from a Reformed minister was denied by Luther and all dogmatists. He affirms that the reception unto salvation is a matter of faith, rightly understood, and cannot be understood intellectually or esthetically. It requires complete self-humiliation and submission to the words of Christ.<sup>75</sup> The humble faith that takes the words as they stand, receives the gift. Forgiveness is received as a reality by the believer.

The confessional Lutheran position on the distinction between spiritual and bodily eating, as well as faith's influence on the reception of the sacramental gifts, is, according to Sasse, in adherence with Luther's position.

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<sup>73</sup>Ibid., p. 371, cf. the similar thinking behind the obicem ponere, supra, p. 84.

<sup>74</sup>Sasse, Vom Sakrament, p. 54, 1 Cor. 11:29.

<sup>75</sup>Sasse, This is, p. 384.



The careful exegesis is followed by statements on the spiritual eating of the flesh of Christ which is nothing else than faith, and the oral or sacramental eating, "when the true, essential body and blood of Christ are also orally received and partaken of in the Holy Supper, by all who eat and drink the consecrated bread and wine in the Supper--by the believing as a certain pledge and assurance that their sins are surely forgiven them and that Christ dwells and is efficacious in them, but by the unbelieving for their judgment and condemnation."<sup>76</sup>

A parallel to this importance of faith, is Luther's stress on faith as one of the constitutive elements of the Church, a subjective nota ecclesiae.<sup>77</sup> As the communion with Christ's body and blood is an article of faith, so also the Church. It is not a Platonic idea of an invisible entity. Sasse affirms that the signs of the Church are visible signs. But the satis est of Augustana VII includes also a necesse est, focusing on the content, the belief in the Real Presence.<sup>78</sup>

Concerning liturgical renewal, Sasse refutes religious estheticism, and holds that "Only faith in the Sacramental Gift . . . can renovate our celebrations and Holy Communion and therewith our services."<sup>79</sup> Christ in his earthly days was recognized as God, only by the believers. His disguise under the sacramental element is also recognized only by believers.

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<sup>76</sup>Ibid., pp. 337-338, quoting Sol. Decl. VII, 63, BS 993; Sasse, Vom Sakrament, pp. 173-175, referring to Ep. VII, 42, BS 803; Ep. VII, 5, BS 797; Sol. Decl. VII, 37, BS 983; Sol. Decl. VII, 61, BS 993.

<sup>77</sup>Sasse, Here We Stand, p. 130.

<sup>78</sup>Sasse, In Statu, pp. 60-61; cf. pp. 54-55, 123.

<sup>79</sup>Sasse, "Liturgy and Lutheranism," Una Sancta, VIII, No. 3, 16; cf. Sasse, In Statu, pp. 83-84.



Sasse claims that the early Church almost exclusively adhered to Paul's corporal conception and that the Reformation brought back John's genuine understanding that the sacramental meal was to evoke life, or as Luther put it: "Glaubst du, so hast du."<sup>80</sup>

Faith is therefore not irrelevant for practice and salvation, however strongly one emphasizes the objectivity of the Presence.

Aalen

In his definition of the Church, Aalen stresses the character of faith-fellowship,<sup>81</sup> as well as the objective administration of the means of grace. That does not invoke the notion of an invisible church. Just as Jesus' appearance on earth was concrete and visible, so is he really present in his sacramental actions. Both Christ and his Church are concrete and real entities, yet both are perceivable only by faith.

Aalen's more extensive treatment of Baptism is also illustrating for our context. His dogmatic thesis is:

As a sacramental one-time event, Baptism is the entrance to that state of grace wherein faith lives its new life in fellowship with God in Christ. It mediates in a fundamental way the regenerating and justifying grace for the whole lifetime, but in such a manner that it works personal salvation only where it is received in faith and where the baptismal grace is retained and renewed in daily repentance by the other means of grace; otherwise it works judgment over unbelief and apostasy.<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>80</sup>Hermann Sasse, "Warum müssen wir an der lutherischen Abendmahl-  
slehre festhalten?" Allgemeine Evangelisch-Lutherische Kirchenzeitung,  
LXXI (1938), 93.

<sup>81</sup>Aalen, Grunnriss, p. 81, "trossamfunn."

<sup>82</sup>Ibid., p. 96.



The Lord's Supper stands in this renewing ministry, and thus is efficacious only when received in faith.

With Augustine, Luther claimed the principle of faith: "man is justified not because he works, but because he believes."<sup>83</sup> In opposition to Augustine, and with him Calvin, Luther held that the sacrament in itself has saving power. Yet, this objective saving power works personal salvation only when it is received in faith or when it works faith.<sup>84</sup> Faith is not only referred to the word of promise in the sacrament, but also to the sacramental word of action. For the Supper, Aalen contends, this distinction is not explicitly as clear as for Baptism, but is nevertheless to be presupposed.

Aalen combats vigorously any form of ordo salutis theology, claiming that it detracts from the objectivity of the means of grace. In his pursuit of correct terminology on issues such as awakening, revival, and new birth, he stresses that faith as saving faith only receives its full meaning as a gift from the Spirit, which excludes all subjectivity. Thereby the objective aspect is maintained at the expense of the personal faith, although that is obviously not Aalen's intention. The active cooperation of faith is a result of the passive coming-to-be through the activity of the Spirit, through his means.<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>83</sup>Ibid., "iustificat, non quia fit, sed quia creditur"; cf. supra, p. 84.

<sup>84</sup>Ibid.; cf. Leif Grane, Confessio Augustana (Copenhagen: Gyldendal, 1972), pp. 121-126, stressing the function of the sacrament as that of arousing and strengthening faith, rather than creating it; their sign-character of God's will toward men, is dependant on faith, CA XIII.

<sup>85</sup>Ibid., pp. 103, 106; cf. Schlink, p. 175: "faith is pure reception"; p. 187, desperate faith clings to the sacrament.



Since it is the administration of the means of grace that brings a person to faith, it is only right to say that one is justified by faith, subjectively; Augustana V testifies to the subjective acceptance of what objectively is distributed through word and sacrament. Therefore the notion of the Orthodoxy, especially Johann Gerhard, that forgiveness of sins is an effect of faith,<sup>86</sup> makes faith a human condition for grace. Aalen claims the gift itself, that is, the forgiveness of sins, is available in the means, and intended to be received by faith.

Faith is therefore a fides salvifica not by its own function or the contrition and repentance connected with it . . . but alone by Christ's atoning work (munus sacerdotale) and the forgiveness of sins, which is the fruit of the atonement, being offered by the means of grace.<sup>87</sup>

Aalen continuously combats making the grace in Christ conditioned by man's faith. The crucial question is always how the atonement concretely becomes forgiveness of sins for the individual. In this sense, Lutheranism stresses it as a result of the means of grace, while the Reformed do not speak of a direct act through these means. In treating manducatio indignorum and oralis, Aalen therefore holds that Lutheranism does not disregard faith, and does not speak of personal salvation apart from faith. Nevertheless, faith is not faith, unless it is pure reception of God's grace in Christ, unless forgiveness as such is present and offered in the sacrament before faith, and in a sense independent of faith or unbelief. This is the content of Luther's assertion in

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<sup>86</sup>Ibid., p. 113, effectus fidei, cf. CA XIII: "qua per sacramenta exhibentur et ostenduntur."

<sup>87</sup>Ibid., p. 117.



his Small Catechism that forgiveness, life, and salvation is given us in the Supper, not only when faith is added, but already by the fact that Christ's body and blood, which has acquired the forgiveness, is given to all participants.<sup>88</sup>

The unconditional character of the promise cannot be stressed enough, according to Aalen. It is, in essence, the difference between Law and Gospel which here is exemplified, rejecting any form of synergism. Thus the gift of faith is a result of the favor of the Gospel. The radical character of both sin and grace is only then taken care of, as well as the indissoluble inner relationship between favor and donum.<sup>89</sup> No mediation of this faith occurs outside of the means of grace, they thereby constitute it, as Augustana V makes clear.

Aalen proposes to be a strict defendant of the evangelical view on Word and Sacrament as instrumenta Spiritus Sancti.<sup>90</sup> He admits, however, that there is a gap in the Lutheran conception of the relationship between the two means. The undecided factor is clearest seen in the relationship between justification and the doctrine of the sacraments as media for forgiveness of sins. One must presuppose, he says, when justification by faith is spoken of in the Confessions, that the forgiveness, which is the content of justification, is mediated to faith by the sacraments. Yet, the stress that faith alone makes a person worthy for salvation,

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<sup>88</sup> Aalen, Ord og Sakrament, pp. 76-77.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid., p. 138, what Aalen calls a "practical-Christological" solution, cf. pp. 135-141, strongly opposing the Catholic thesis: "gratia non tollit, sed perficit naturam."

<sup>90</sup> Aalen, "Evangeliet og Nædemidlene," Tidsskrift, XVIII, 49.



shows the unfinished character of this question in the Confessions.<sup>91</sup> Already in the Orthodoxy the isolation of justification from the sacraments undermined the basic thesis of the means of grace as causa instrumentalis to justification. Thus the sacrament is not merely an offer of grace, but a real act of grace, not in nobis, but extra nos.<sup>92</sup>

Aalen's most controversial point is perhaps his contention that the sacraments are more efficacious than the Word, as to the personal application of the grace.

Through the Word as means of grace, God offers salvation to all, in Baptism he gives it to those who receive it, and in the Supper he strengthens faith in those who have received the salvation.<sup>93</sup>

In his ecumenical analysis with regard to the Lord's Supper, Aalen concludes that faith as fides salvifica is only retained where its close connection to Christology is maintained. Only then can there be a real gift, a created faith by God.<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>91</sup>Ibid., XVIII, 50-51, CA XIII; cf. p. 69, Large Cat. IV, 33, BS 697.

<sup>92</sup>Ibid., XVIII, 67, holding that neither Erik Pontoppidan nor F. Pieper do fully justice to the proprium of Baptism; cf. pp. 72, 70: "the sacrament mediates the transition from atonement to justification."

<sup>93</sup>Aalen, Ord og Sakrament, p. 204, taken from his early publication Dåpen og barnet (Oslo: 1947), where he distinguishes between a salvation-seeking faith and a salvation-acquired faith, the last evoked only by Baptism, and renewed through Word and the Supper; cf. p. 214, footnote 39. Olav Valen-Senstad, who was the chief opponent of Aalen from 1947 on denounced his book as crypto-romanist.

<sup>94</sup>Aalen, "Der Kampf," Theologische Literaturzeitung, LXXI, 90; cf. O. Valen-Senstad, The Word That Can Never Die (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1966), pp. 121-125, criticizing the "naturalistic" concept of an effect of the sacrament, irrespective of faith.



Hardt

Hardt rejects that faith sets any other prerequisite for an article of faith, than simply accepting it as God's command and will, without asking its benefit.<sup>95</sup> A servant has no business prying into the affairs of his master. The "take and eat!" confers upon all Christians a "must," that is, an obedience towards God's inscrutable will.

Without in any way denying the gift of the sacrament, Luther stresses this obedience to God's prescriptions without pious considerations about personal comfort and need of salvation. These considerations should not effect the interpretation of the institution of the sacrament.

Everything must be done in faith, and where faith is lacking everything is distorted. Hardt claims that "faith" for Luther tends to include an element of worship; "faith is the right worship, namely that I believe that his flesh and blood are there, given and shed for me."<sup>96</sup> This Hardt claims is an identification of faith and worship, yet noting a distinction when the outward physical act is said to presuppose an inner act of faith.<sup>97</sup>

It is a common misunderstanding of the Reformation's stress of faith, that the individual faith is to replace both priest and means of grace. Luther's critique of medieval theology was on this point

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<sup>95</sup>Hardt, Om Altarets, pp. 12-13.

<sup>96</sup>Ibid., p. 71, quoting WA Br II, 555 "Der Glaube ist das rechte Anbeten," not discussing whether the implication is that faith as such is the true and real adoration.

<sup>97</sup>Hardt, Venerabilis, p. 219, WA XI, 446.



primarily aimed at its uncertainty, because the human activity became a part of the requirements for salvation, namely confession, contrition, and satisfaction. This undermines the faith, and results in fear and despair. On the contrary, the faith that is demanded before the use of the means of grace is trust in the Gospel, contained in the words of institution; here the whole world is being called to righteousness. Faith directs itself toward the Word, as also the powerful Word directs itself toward the faith, creates, wakes up, and supports it.<sup>98</sup>

Forgiveness is imparted to the participant only through the words "given and shed for you." By this reception one receives Christ's body and blood, and it becomes one's own treasure. "Now Christ's body cannot be something unfruitful and unuseful."<sup>99</sup> The power of the means of grace seems unchallenged, and the transformation of the individual seems to occur by way of necessity.

As it is characterized as a remedy for both body and soul, so the partaking of it without faith and trust, is to oppose the "doctor's prescription." Such action is indeed poisonous and gives no benefit and strength to the individual.<sup>100</sup>

Hardt rejects the notion of "magic," yet allows it, with the Gnesio-Lutheran Erhard Sperber of the sixteenth century, to be designated as "holy and commanded magic."<sup>101</sup> So-called "white magic" comforts the

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<sup>98</sup>Hardt, Om Altarets, pp. 84-86.

<sup>99</sup>Ibid., quoting WA XXX, i, 225.

<sup>100</sup>Ibid., p. 87, referring to WA XXX, i, 231.

<sup>101</sup>Ibid., p. 88, magia sancta & iussa.



creation, and comes from God, who does not ask for advice, but has created us without our help, and has saved us, also without our help. In the sacrament He wants us to believe in Him as such a God.

When the sacramental presence, and thereby also the gift of the sacrament, is made dependent on faith, Hardt claims the Christological aspect is nullified. He seriously challenges V. Vajta's position,<sup>102</sup> where Word and faith are presented as constitutive factors for the sacramental action. Hardt holds that Luther distinguished between those words of Christ that presuppose faith to be realized and those that work "without regarding its use in faith."<sup>103</sup> The latter group includes the words of institution.

Hardt also rejects the position of Brenz, for whom the presence is factual only for the faith, since faith is the means by which one can grasp the presence. Brenz does not, however, deny the literal meaning of the institution-words, but distinguishes between the bodily presence effected by the words, and the presence received by faith. Christ's body is therefore, according to Brenz, the spiritual food and the gift of forgiveness, not merely a sign of it. It is aimed at the believer. For Luther, however, the aim is rather to provoke faith in the New

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<sup>102</sup>Hardt, Venerabilis, pp. 86-87, referring to V. Vajta, Die Theologie des Gottesdienstes bei Luther (Stockholm: Svenska Kyrkans Diakonistyrelses Bokförlag, 1952), pp. 159, 171, 187.

<sup>103</sup>Hardt, Om Altarets, p. 87, "abgesehen vom glaubenden Gebrauch"; cf. WA XXVI, 287, where the so-called "Heisselwort" and "Thettelwort" are distinguished. Hardt claims this points to an adductive transformation, and not a productive.



Testament in the blood of Christ.<sup>104</sup> Faith therefore should be pre-occupied with the forgiveness of sins given in the sacrament.

Hardt holds that

The passive "sacramental" act of faith, includes also an element of active "sacrificial" nature . . . . The work of salvation is acquired by contemplating on the power of God's blood.<sup>105</sup>

This creates an outer response in the worshipping attitude of the believer.

Chemnitz distinguished between Christ's presence in creation and in his means of grace. The first is not the form of presence one stresses for faith to grasp. Faith is always to be referred to the latter presence. Chemnitz here treats the Christological question in its reference to faith, and according to Hardt, he here places himself in the tradition of Cyril, John Damascene and Luther.<sup>106</sup>

Hardt's conclusion is, then, that faith is the response to the gift being presented, given and imparted on the communicant. There is little reflection on faith as necessary or conditional in any way for receiving the benefit of the sacrament.<sup>107</sup>

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<sup>104</sup>Hardt, *Venerabilis*, p. 146, referring to *WA* VI, 524; for Hardt this has definite liturgical consequences, as the elevation; cf. pp. 101-103, 220.

<sup>105</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 222, *WA* XX, 758.

<sup>106</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 113.

<sup>107</sup>The limited source-material must here be stressed, cf. *supra*, pp. 6-7.



## Summary

The diverse treatment of our topic is evident. While the material is much the same, the accent differs. Sasse has the greatest spectrum of issues involved in the Gospel-character of the Supper. The sign-function is stressed implying the gift for the whole man; likewise the eschatological character of the meal, understood not only as a hope, but as an anticipation of the coming world. The forgiveness imparted is a strengthening of the wayfarers. The uniqueness of the Supper is related to its historical setting, and unique institution, but also to the fact that a bodily eating has Christological implications, namely that we receive the humanity of Christ, which was sacrificed, resurrected and glorified for man's salvation. This does not imply a special grace in the sacrament. Sasse claims that only the literal interpretation guards the proprium also of the "given and shed for you."

Sasse stresses the faith-aspect of the young Luther, holding that it was never abandoned, even though Luther later held forth the objectivity of the sacrament. Faith is not created by the sacrament, rather it is the sacrament which is accepted by faith, and which assures the faithful of God's grace. Faith and spiritual eating is the same thing, therefore when faith is present, the bodily eating is in fact spiritual, and thus beneficial.

Aalen is constantly combatting subjectivity. He stresses the creative function of the sacrament. The Christological implication has objective value whether one believes or not. Aalen does, however, repeatedly urge that without faith there is no individual benefit. The mediation of Christ's gifts through the Supper seems to have superiority



over the proclamation of the Gospel. The individual application and the unconditional character is more explicit in the sacramental action. Forgiveness of sins is therefore primarily a result of the means of grace, because the body given to the communicant is that body which acquired the forgiveness through the atonement. The proprium of the Supper is its bodily transmission of the same Presence as in the Word. This results in the mystical union with Christ's humanity. Aalen deplores that the Lutheran Confessions have not fully considered the relationship between the sacramental gift, as objectively given, and the doctrine of justification by faith alone. The former is unduly compromised by the latter.

Hardt stresses the objective character of the Gospel-application in the Supper, thus also implying its superiority over the mere proclamation. He considers the reception itself an act of faith, and the function of the sacrament is primarily to provoke, create and awaken faith, rather than presuppose it. Forgiveness is imparted through the words "given and shed for you." The power of these words seems unchallenged, and works, by necessity, a transformation. Admittedly, Hardt holds that using the Supper without faith is using it contrary to its prescriptive use, resulting in no benefit. However, the objective Presence and the gift imparted to the communicant, is not dependant on his faith. That would be to nullify the Christological basis. Hardt does not reflect on the danger of regarding the sacrament as a guarantee of salvation. The danger seems exclusively to be the opposite, namely that the subjective faith is made the condition for the objectively applied grace. He does not seem to fear a too objective or materialistic notion in the individual application.



Both Aalen and Hardt show an almost total disregard for the young Luther, with his stress on faith as a presupposition for the reception of salvation, while Sasse urges this aspect strongly. None of them denies faith as necessary for personal salvation, but when the objective reality of the gift of Christ's body is claimed by Aalen and Hardt, faith is reduced to a secondary, and often uncertain, place. The link between the two seems extremely difficult to clarify.



## CHAPTER IV

### ECCLESIASTICAL FUNCTION

#### Functional Real Presence

Sasse

What implications for Church-practice do the principles of Christology and salvation have? Are there implementations that must follow, or are the previously treated subjects really irrelevant for the practical functions in and related to the Church?

The sacramental system of the Church was from early times only seriously attacked by sectarians; "the ideas of priesthood and sacrifice as such were never attacked by Christians who wanted to be faithful members of the Catholic Church."<sup>1</sup> Traces in the early church of comparing the sacramental liturgy with the sacrificial cult of the Old Testament go back to the first century. However,

While for the Fathers of the second century the sacrifice is the prayer, or the whole celebration, or the gifts of bread and wine put on the altar, the idea arises in the third century that the body and blood of the Lord are the sacrifice.<sup>2</sup>

Cyprian presents the idea of a special priesthood, a real sacerdos who offers in behalf of the people. Bishops and presbyters became priests

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<sup>1</sup>Hermann Sasse, This is my Body (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, c.1959), p. 19.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 20.



in a special sense. Hermann Sasse claims that the universal priesthood, however, was principally never given up. He further denies that there is any New Testament evidence in support of the concept that the Church as the "body" offers together with Christ, its "head." In the New Testament there is only one atoning sacrifice, that of Christ's highpriesthood. The exegetical basis of the Catholic Church, that "this do in remembrance of me" designates a special priesthood, is completely untenable.

On the one hand one has the synergistic trend, undermining the solus Christus and sola fide, and on the other hand one sees the priestly perfection, relegating the laity to a group of spectators. Thus there occurs a separation of the personal piety among the laity from the corporate worship of the professional men of religion.<sup>3</sup> In the ancient times these were in harmony with each other.

Sasse claims that no one can properly understand the sacraments and the controversies over them, unless he keeps in mind that "the sacrament is primarily something to be celebrated, not to be speculated on."<sup>4</sup> However, one must always bear in mind that liturgy and dogma belong together, and that renewal in the first is impossible without renewal or basis in the latter. Johann Gerhard, when discussing the sacraments in his Loci theologici, treated them not as signs, but as actions.<sup>5</sup> This

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<sup>3</sup>Ibid., pp. 22, 63; cf. C. Fr. Wislöff, The Gift of Communion (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, c.1964), p. 142, stressing that the office of administering the sacrament is to give the sacrament, not to change it.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 13, cf. the principle set down by Celestine I: "lex orandi lex credendi"; cf. H. Sasse, "Liturgy and Lutheranism," Una Sancta, VIII, No. 3 (1948), 13.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 26, cf. supra, p. 65.



stresses that the Real Presence is primarily to be understood in connection with the celebration of the sacrament and not as an isolated holy element on the altar. Later orthodox theologians as Aegidius and Nicholas Hunnius held that "Christ's body and blood are present only at the 'moment' when they are being received."<sup>6</sup>

However, Sasse urges that as far as Luther himself is concerned, there cannot be the slightest doubt that he never did limit the Real Presence to the instant of distribution and reception. He never abandoned the view that, by the words of consecration, bread and wine "became" the body and blood of Christ. Otherwise elevation and adoration would be completely meaningless. Likewise the reverence and care practiced by Luther on the question of remnants, or the mixing of consecrated and unconsecrated, clearly indicate his concept of duration of the body and blood. He rejected the mixing of the two types of hosts, and stressed that the remnants should be consumed or burned.<sup>7</sup>

In a letter to Wolferinus, Luther warns against a misunderstanding of Melancthon's principle of "no sacrament outside of sacramental use." The "action" is to be defined from the words of institution of the Lord lasting until the whole celebration is over, the people dismissed and

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p. 173; this position referred to and also held by F. Pieper, Christian Dogmatics (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1962), III, 373.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., pp. 173-174, D. Martin Luthers Werke, Kritische Gesamtausgabe. Briefwechsel (Weimar: Hermann Böhlau, 1883), X, 3888. Hereafter referred to as WA Br. Cf. WA VI, 524; WA XI, 450-451; WA LIV, 163.



the altar cleared. The Formula of Concord, likewise does not identify the usus with sumptio, but rather with the whole actio.<sup>8</sup>

The consumption is then to be regarded as a part of the action. Referring to Luther's position, Sasse holds that the bread is the body of Christ also when it lies on the altar or when the pastor holds it in his hands. A specification of the moment does not follow from the consecration. No mathematical point of time when the heavenly and earthly res are united in the sacrament can be defined.

Melanchthon's position was promoted by his fear of a materialistic "bread-worship." He emphasized the celebration and the action, rather than the elements themselves. Sasse claims, in fact, that his spiritualization destroyed the reality of the incarnation. Yet, Sasse admits that one must also assume that Melanchthon regarded the expressions of Marburg Article XV: "leiblich im Brot und Wein" as representing his understanding.<sup>9</sup> H. Gollwitzer holds Melanchthon's position to be that "the place of the Presence is not really the element, rather the action." This is correct, says Sasse, only if "really" is underscored, because Melanchthon never denied that the Presence "also" was connected with the elements.<sup>10</sup> Yet, the

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<sup>8</sup>Hermann Sasse, "Zum lutherischen Verstandnis der Konsekration," Briefe No. 26 (1952), pp. 13-15, WA Br, X, 3894; Sol. Decl. VII, 83-84, Die Bekenntnisschriften der evangelisch-Lutherischen Kirche (1930 edition; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1967), 1000. Hereafter referred to as BS.

<sup>9</sup>Sasse, This is, p. 316; cf. H. Sasse, Vom Sakrament des Altars (Leipzig: Verlag Dörffling & Franke, 1941), pp. 140-145.

<sup>10</sup>Sasse, Vom Sakrament, p. 152, cf. Corpus Reformatorum, Philippi Melanchthonis Opera quae Supersunt omnia, edited by C. G. Bretschneider (Halis Saxonum: C. A. Schwetschke et filium, 1834), IX, 962. Hereafter referred to as CR.



difference in emphasis is plain. Melancthon disregarded more and more the elements themselves, because of misconceptions and misuses. He therefore stressed the consumption itself as the decisive moment of Presence.<sup>11</sup>

The rule of the Lutheran Reformers was that there is no sacrament, and consequently no presence of the body and blood of Christ, "apart from the use instituted by Christ" or "apart from the action divinely instituted." The consecration itself does not make the sacrament.<sup>12</sup> The "use" here is not the mere sumption, but the whole action or celebration. Christ is present in it all. A result of the Besserer and Wolferinus struggles, was that all speculation on time was abandoned, only stressing the whole action as an entity.

One of the results of the Saliger dispute seems to have been the distinction between usus and actio on the one hand and sumptio and manducatio on the other. When the Wismarer Abschied, one of the forerunners to the Formula of Concord, maintains that Christ is present "before use," it simply means "before sumption."<sup>13</sup> The general terminology, however, identifies "use" with the complete action.

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<sup>11</sup>Ibid., p. 154, cf. CR VIII, 660: "extra sumptionem panem non habere rationem sacramenti, sed in ipsa communicatione pignus esse, quo inserimur corpori Christi."

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., p. 184, cf. Sol. Decl. VII, 85, BS 1001: "Nihil habet rationem sacramenti extra usum a Christo institutum."

<sup>13</sup>H. Sasse, "Consecration and Real Presence," unpublished paper (January 1957), p. 22, cf. Sol. Decl. VII, 126, BS 1016: "qui in coena sua, in legitimo nimirum eius usu, vere et substantialiter praesens est."



Aalen

Aalen gives extremely little attention to our present topic. He states the general principle, according to the Confessions, that the Church is not based on the sacraments as static entities, or the office of administering them as a state or rank. It is only Word and Sacrament in function that creates the foundation of the Church. The only precondition is that the administration is in accordance with the Gospel.<sup>14</sup>

The centrality of the Supper in the life of the congregation, does not indicate a spiritual motherhood in the office of the ministry. The ministry takes place in the midst of the congregation and the office exists for the sake of the universal priesthood. The individual bearers of the office are mere members of this priesthood. On the other hand, there is a special shepherd and teacher office, according to Christ's institution, and which acts on Christ's behalf.<sup>15</sup> Aalen designates the office of the ministry as the munus propheticum, while the universal priesthood is called the munus sacerdotium. This implies that he does not follow R. Prenter in his sacrificial concept of the sacrament.

Prenter refers to the Lord's Supper as a part of Christ's sacerdotal work. That the office of administering the sacrament is placed in a Christological perspective, Aalen approves of. However, the question

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<sup>14</sup>Leiv Aalen, Dogmatisk Grunnriss (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1965), p. 94; cf. Apol. VII, 20, 26, 29, BS 238-241.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., pp. 80, 83, cf. Apol. VII, 28, BS 240. Aalen stresses the instituted office, rather than its basis in the gifts of grace in a congregation.



whether that legitimizes the concept of a continued sacrificial service, and an earthly sacrificial priesthood, is denied.<sup>16</sup>

In fairness to Prenter, it must be said that he distinguishes between an atoning and a praising sacrifice. The Supper is only of the second type. However, he wishes to present the administration of the sacrament as a mediation between Christ's priesthood and the universal priesthood. The minister carries Christ's justice to God on behalf of the congregation, as that by which we are justified. The reconciling ministry of 2 Cor. 5:18 is a sacrificial ministry, according to Prenter. He claims we offer Christ anew in our praise, as the only perfect sacrifice of love.<sup>17</sup>

Beyond this Aalen does not enter the questions under our topic. He does not consider the problems of remnants, and the mixing of unconsecrated and consecrated, as he neither stresses the consecration in particular. We may from the silence on these matters infer that Aalen does not consider them of dogmatic importance. His conclusion is therefore seemingly that the elements outside of use, that is, outside their connection with the Gospel in their distribution formula "given and shed for you," have no value, and that the Real Presence is not to be stretched beyond this distribution. Thus, factors such as elevation, adoration and worship cannot be integral parts of the sacramental celebration.

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<sup>16</sup>Leiv Aalen, "Supplement til Leiv Aalen: Dogmatisk Grunnriss," unpublished mimeographed lectures (Oslo: Menighetsfakultetet, 1967), pp. 61-64.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., p. 64.



Hardt

When Luther used the phrase "no sacrament outside of the sacramental use," he meant to avoid the misuses adverse to the institution of the sacrament, but did not make any judgment on the moment of presence. Hardt claims further that Luther was mistaken when he, in letters on the Wolferinus case, rejected that Melanchthon would have supported the thesis of that man, that when the action ends, the sacrament ends.<sup>18</sup> Wolferinus thereby legitimized the mixing of unconsecrated with consecrated elements after the celebration. Hardt suggests that his thesis really was: "when the effect ceases, the cause ceases."<sup>19</sup> Luther himself had a somewhat similar structure, holding that "when the promise ceases, faith also ceases."<sup>20</sup> However, Luther is there not addressing himself to the factuality of the Real Presence in the consecrated elements.

Hardt concludes that for Wolferinus the presence was conditioned by the action as its cause. In his counter-argumentation, Luther reached back to G. Biel and other scholastics holding that the words are not the forma. He wished to show that the words have a causative effect in originating a resting reality, which otherwise is independent of the words or the action as such. Wolferinus' reasoning would lead to a limitation of the Presence to a mathematical point in the Mass.

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<sup>18</sup> Tom Hardt, Venerabilis & Adorabilis Eucharistia (Uppsala: Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis, c. 1971), p. 230; cf. WA Br X, 3888: "cessante actione cessare sacramentum"; WA Br X, 3894: "Hoc certe non vult D. Philippus."

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.; WA XXXIX, ii, 131; "cessante effectu cessat causa."

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.; WA LVI, 45: "Cessante promissione cessat et fides."



Luther defines the sacramental action in such a way that it is extended to include the consumption of all the elements . . . . Thereby the sacrament is not subordinate in relation to the action, but the action in relation to the sacrament.<sup>21</sup>

Luther also gave prescriptions to consume the leftovers, the so-called reliqua, which are, and should be treated as, a sacrament. Hardt claims that Luther considered the full consumption a dogmatic necessity.

However, it is true that Luther, like his Gnesio-Lutheran successors, did not claim that a remnant host after the mass still was the body of Christ. In answer to Besserer, a pastor who had replaced an unconsecrated host for a lost, consecrated one, Luther coined the classical phrase: "nothing is a sacrament outside of use."

If that situation should arise that by a dogmatic objectionable action, a validly consecrated sacrament comes "extra usum," then the Real Presence can no longer be said to exist. On this matter the action becomes decisive for the sacrament.<sup>22</sup>

E. F. Peters claims that Luther is inconsequent here, "he falls into the Melancthonian trap."<sup>23</sup> Hardt refutes this, as well as the notion that the Presence in the monstrance also must be the consequence of the ubiquity of Christ. Only the guarantee of the Word can justify any doctrine, therefore the transubstantiation and the sacrifice of the mass are also rejected. Luther regards all prolongations of the mass beyond the ordinary meal as "less Biblical," even if he does not deny the Real Presence when the elements are carried to the sick.

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<sup>21</sup>Ibid., p. 231; cf. Tom Hardt, Om Altarets Sakrament (Uppsala: Bokforlaget Pro Veritate, c.1973), p. 75.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., p. 235, WA Br XI, 4186.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid.; Cf. E. F. Peters, "Extra Usum Nullum Sacramentum" (unpublished Doctor's Thesis, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, 1968), p. 221, cf. pp. 218-221.



In none of these cases does Luther approve of the sacrament, when the elements are treated in a manner that is no longer a part of the eating, taken in a wider sense. The lost, or otherwise not consumed, bread, whether it be secluded or borne in procession, lacks the characteristic of a sacrament and the promise of the Word: "an in gestato et incluso sacramento sit corpus Christi, nihil curemus."<sup>24</sup>

Luther's great respect for the Real Presence is also reflected in his reaction to accidents during the celebration, for example, wine being spilled. He was horrified when he once saw wine being spilled on the coat of a woman and on the floor in the Wittenberg cathedral. Immediately he tried to lick up the remains and later ordered the piece of cloth on which the wine was spilled to be cut off the coat, and to be burned together with the wood-shaving carved off the floor. Hardt claims that Luther's actions

do not describe emotional reflexes of a former medieval priest, whose conservative nature holds on to the bonds that no longer are justified by his intellectual development. They are part of a harmonious sacramental perception, the structures of which are completely coherent, carefully thought through, and often defended.<sup>25</sup>

Melanchthon did indeed express precisely that opinion which Luther rejected, that when the use ceased, the sacrament ceased, and that the leftovers were not sacraments.<sup>26</sup> This was Wolferinus' position.

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<sup>24</sup>Ibid., p. 236; WA Br VII, 2273; cf. WA Br IX, 3622, where "reservation" of sacrament is treated parallel to transubstantiation.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid., p. 241; cf. p. 240 on Luther's strictness and seriousness in case of accidents.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid.; cf. CR VII, 377: "cessante usu sacramenti cesset quoque sacramentum," and the remnants that are not used "non sunt sacramenta quia actio tota est sacramentum." Cf. ibid., p. 247, CR IX, 348, where Melanchthon criticizes the conduct corresponding exactly to that of Luther.



Melanchthon refers to God's sovereignty and to his purpose with the sacrament, and holds that God does not tie himself meaninglessly to the element, which is not distributed. His "action" definition avoids the problem of when the sacramental presence ceases to exist. Even though the sacramental action therefore falls in the category of personal relationship to Christ, Melanchthon recommends full consumption of the elements to avoid misunderstandings, but also in respect of Christ's presence.

Hardt treats at great length the disputes over elevation and adoration, in 1550's and 1560's.<sup>27</sup> Suffice it to point out the conclusion as to the doctrinal content. The main point of controversy is, according to Hardt, taken correctly by Gnesio-Lutheran Benedikt Morgenstern in defending the controversial Johann Saliger. Morgenstern distinguished between Luther's "three parts of the sacrament," as (1) element; (2) word; and (3) God's command or institution, while his opponents labeled the third point as "use." For the Melanchthonians the action had become a cause for the Presence. Therefore the leftover was not the body any more. The Gnesio-Lutherans spoke of reliqua only in the mass, not after it, as they neither taught the sacramental character of the leftover. It may rightly be conceded, as already has been shown, that Luther did not hold to the Presence when the sumption could not occur.<sup>28</sup> The reason is obviously that such an act violates the institution.

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<sup>27</sup>Ibid., pp. 249-269; cf. infra, pp. 130-137.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., p. 258.



Hardt rejects the contentions that these struggles, and the Saliger dispute in particular, were merely results of unyielding stubbornness. The content is highly dogmatic. Saliger was accused of teaching the Presence ante usum, while his opponents engaged in a formal logical argumentation about the forma of the sacrament, necessitating the sumptio.<sup>29</sup> The dispute in Rostock climaxed in Christmas 1568. While Saliger denied the accusations that he taught absolute ante usum, the Melanchthonians from then on seemed to be showing a certain restraint by not identifying the consumption with the use, but having the former qualify the latter.

In course of the following negotiations, where the elevation, which Saliger highly defended, was a major issue, the Rostock clergy decided to abstain from a temporal definition of the Presence, just asserting that the sumption was necessary. This view was also held by Aegidius Hunnius, and later defended by Johann Gerhard, the foremost exponent of Lutheran Orthodoxy. The Melanchthonian view had thus overtaken large parts of the Lutheran body, and elevation was abolished, resisting any specification of time and space.<sup>30</sup>

Hardt observes that also on this point did Chemnitz follow Luther more closely than most others. He stressed that Christ's body was also

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid., p. 261, "Forma coenae dat esse rei. Forma coenae est tota actio. Ergo tota actio dat esse rei."

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., pp. 268-269; cf. Johann Gerhard, Loci Theologici (Ed. Preuss edition, Berlin: Gustav Schlawitz, 1867), p. 152: Elevation abolished because "Christus non simpliciter dixit Hoc est corpus meum," but speaks of the whole meal. The essential parts are thus: "consecratio, distributio, sumptio in manducatione & bibitione."



present ante manducationem, nevertheless holding that only the communion made the action complete as a formal cause of the Presence.

The final formulations of the Formula of Concord seem to have been interpreted quite differently. The "use" is treated very briefly, and according to Hardt, only in rejecting the Roman private mass. He points out, however, that the Schwäbisch-Sachsen Concord was edited by the Rostock-faculty, so as to leave room for their special thesis of Melanchthonianism that "the legitimacy of consecration is proved only by completing the actio through the sumptio."<sup>31</sup>

Pointing to gains in the Formula of Concord for both Gnesio-Lutherans and Melanchthonians, Hardt nevertheless rejects that it is a compromise-formula, and that the only elements rejected in the Confession were the Roman doctrine of usus, and a very narrow identification of usus and sumptio.<sup>32</sup> The indecisiveness of the Formula is also due to the fact that the letters of Luther being referred to, probably are those to Wolferinus, and they were interpreted very differently. Therefore the dogmatic standpoint remained undecided, as to the reliqua, even though the Melanchthonians agreed to a complete sumption.

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<sup>31</sup>Ibid., p. 285.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid., pp. 286-287; cf. Sol. Decl. VII, 75, BS 998 to the Gnesio-Lutheran contention that the consecration creates the Presence: "durch die gesprochene Wort, aus Kraft der ersten Einsetzung/nach durch sein Wort, wölchs er da will wiederholet haben,/kräftig ist"; cf. VII, 83, BS 1000, to the Melanchthonian stress: "Aber dieser Segen wo nicht die ganze Actio . . . gehalten wird . . . macht alleine keine Sakrament." Hardt disagrees with E. F. Peters who holds that the complete sumption was a genuine Lutheran practice, not Melanchthonian. Although the latter opened, principally, for domestic use of the leftovers, he did not advise to do so in practice.



The Göttingen edition of the Confessions refers to Kurtz Bekenntnis of 1571 in commenting on the "use," rejecting all specifications of the moment of presence. Hardt claims the commentary is wrong, the reference in the Formula being not to the Kurtze, Christliche und Eingeltige Wiederholung der Bekenntnis der Kirchen Gottes of 1571, which clearly was regarded as heretical by the circle around the Formula. The reference is rather to Kurtz Bekenntnis und Artickel vom heiligen Abendmahl des Leibes und Bluts Christi of 1574, better known as the Torgau Articles. These articles are not genuine forerunners to the Formula of Concord; they reject the omnipresence of Christ's body, the real exchange of properties, and the adoration of the sacrament.

The modern text-editions [of F.C.] . . . remind us of the fact that it was the Melancthonian school that was to bring home the victory, as a new century appeared. The concrete sacramental belief of the older Lutheranism was thereby doomed to be rejected as medieval and could no longer be defended or even be understood. The cultic use ceased. The conceptions behind it presumably were relegated to the folk-piety, so as to sleep its winter-sleep there.<sup>33</sup>

In his practical admonitions, Hardt stresses the minute care that should be exercised so that only the right amount of elements are consecrated, not leaving anything after the mass. Should there by accident, be some elements left over, they lose their Biblical content. However, because of the deep mysteries involved, they should not be treated merely for domestic purposes, but rather, as Luther urged, be disposed of by,

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<sup>33</sup>Ibid., pp. 288-289; cf. BS 1016, footnote 4. Hardt observes that Sasse and both faculties of Springfield and St. Louis seminaries of the Missouri Synod appeal to this explanation in rejecting all definitions of the moment of Presence.



for example, burning. Accidents that befall the elements, in fact, befall the body and blood of Christ and must also be treated seriously as such.<sup>34</sup>

### Consecration

Sasse

One of the common Protestant prejudices toward Catholic doctrine is that the Roman mass is some kind of magical rite, the words of institution being a magical formula. Sasse rejects the use of the term "magic," as it gives a notion of man being able to impose something upon the deity. According to Thomas, the words are effective as the words of Christ, and Christ is therefore the real consecrator.

However, Sasse holds most firmly that Thomas and the Roman Church did not stick to this conviction, but rather made the priest a partner of Christ in the solemn act of the mass. Thomas is clear on this point:

The consecratory power is not derived only from the words themselves, but also from the power given to the priest in his consecration and ordination when the bishop says to him, Receive the power to offer in the Church the sacrifice for the living as well as for the dead.<sup>35</sup>

According to Thomas, the transubstantiation takes place immediately following the words "This is my body" in the prayer "Qui pridie" of the Canon Missae. Thus Thomistic doctrine has fixed what it calls "the

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<sup>34</sup>Hardt, On Altarets, p. 76.

<sup>35</sup>Sasse, This is, p. 170, Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologiae III, q. 82, art. 1, cf. q. 76, arts. 3-4. Cf. ibid., pp. 44-46.



moment of consecration." It also specifies the end of the Real Presence, namely, when all species are destroyed, either by digestion or otherwise.

Sasse observes that in the Roman mass there is no prayer for transformation, like, for example, in the Gallican liturgy, but rather a prayer of sacrifice, asking God to accept the offering.<sup>36</sup> It is only permissible to speak of a sacrifice, says Sasse, when one thereby implies our spiritual sacrifices and praises, or that Christ offers himself to us.<sup>37</sup> The atoning ephapax must be held up against any form of unbloody repetition, which compromises the finality and sufficiency of Christ's sacrifice at Golgatha. Therefore, the Roman mass is a deep tragedy, because there man actually offers a propitiatory sacrifice to God in an effort to please him. One is, however, reminded of the one-time sacrifice in accordance with the words: "without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins."<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>36</sup>Ibid., pp. 27-28.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid., pp. 85-89; cf. 1 Pet. 2:5, Heb. 13:15-16, Rom. 12:1, Smalc. Art. II, 2, BS 4, WA VI, 368.

<sup>38</sup>Sasse, Vom Sakraments, p. 69, Heb. 9:22; cf. ibid., p. 87, II. Chemnitz, Examen Concilii Tridentini (Ed. Preuss edition, Berlin: Gust. Schlawitz, 1861), Locus VI, Art. 1, p. 383, where Chemnitz confirms the sacrificial aspect of the Eucharist, but not in the atoning sense, never propitiatory. Cf. Sasse, This is, p. 380, Trent Sessio XXII, cap. 1 and 6. Cf. Sasse, "Liturgy and Lutheranism," Una Sancta, where Sasse, nevertheless, seems to see a change in the attitude of Rome. Already in 1947 he writes in highly appreciative terms of Roman preservation of the Real Presence, claiming that an evangelical trend is discernible. Although the idea of sacrifice in connection with the mass has not been abandoned, "it has been so drastically reinterpreted that it comes very close to the evangelical solus Christus, sola gratia."



The Gospel-character of the Lord's Supper destroys the Roman mass. As sure as the Gospel relates a gift, an act extra nos, so the sacramental gift also comes to us without our cooperation.

Sasse asserts that in the Lutheran Church the words of institution are words of consecration, and that all Lutheran liturgies, including Luther's Deutsche Messe, treat them as such. To a Reformed mind, this seems "Papistic," a relapse into Romanism, and none of the classical liturgies of the Reformed churches really contains a consecration. The words of institution are rather understood as a historic narrative addressed to the people.<sup>39</sup>

Luther's position is clear in De Captivitate Babylonica:

For the bread and wine are offered before-hand for blessing in order that they may be sanctified by the word and by prayer, but after they have been blessed and consecrated they are no longer offered, but received as a gift from God.<sup>40</sup>

As the Roman Church, he regards the words of Christ as the forma, which makes the materia. However, Sasse holds that the difference is related to the priestly character. The Roman Church relates the consecratory power partly to the priest and partly to the words, due to the concept of the character indelebilis. This must be rejected, as Johann Gerhard did, in showing that it is a cooperation between Christ and priest.<sup>41</sup> Luther also holds that,

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<sup>39</sup>Sasse, This is, pp. 164-166, cf. WA XIX, 99.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid., p. 165, WA VI, 525.

<sup>41</sup>Ibid., p. 169, Gerhard, III, 148-156. Cf. ibid., p. 168, WA XXXVIII, 240; Sol. Decl. VII, 37, BS 283, on patristic references.



One thing is the sacrament, another thing is the remembrance. The Sacrament we should practice and "do," He says, and besides remember Him, that means teach, believe, and give thanks. Whilst the remembrance is to be thank-offer, the Sacrament itself is not an offering, but rather a gift of God . . . . It was through a misunderstanding that later the sacrament itself only was called "eucharist"<sup>42</sup>

Luther separated the words of institution from the Eucharistic prayer to further emphasize that they were not a part of a man-made performance, but unique. The words were not to be spoken secretly but proclaimed loudly. Neither is Our Father a necessary part of the celebration, and certainly not of the consecration. Sasse first observes that it had a close connection to the words of institution already from the time of the early Church, in Rome from the time of Gregory the Great. However,

Since Jesus never prayed Our Father for Himself and since it is not mentioned in the New Testament in connection with the institution of the sacrament, it does not belong to the institution of Christ and, therefore, is not essential to the celebration of the Lord's Supper. It belongs to the "eucharist" in Luther's sense just as the Sanctus, the Benedictus and the Agnus Dei. The words of consecration are the words of institution only.<sup>43</sup>

The Roman consecration is an immolatio, and offering of the sacrifice. The celebrant is consequently, the sacrificing priest. The ordination is therefore implicit in the command "This do." "Thus in the Roman mass a human being steps into the place which belongs to Christ alone."<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>42</sup>Sasse, "Consecration," p. 16, cf. WA XXX, iii, 606.

<sup>43</sup>Ibid., p. 17; In Deutsche Messe the words of institution are sung, as also the Gospel; the place of Our Father differs in Formula Missae and in Deutsche Messe, respectively after and before the words of institution. Cf. Sol. Decl. VII, 77, BS 299; Large Cat. V, 11, BS 709; WA XXVI, 282.

<sup>44</sup>Ibid., pp. 20, 19.



According to the Lutheran Church the words of institution are consecratory, i.e. effecting the real presence of the body and blood of Christ, solely because they are the words of Christ which are today as powerful as in the first institution if spoken by the properly called minister who speaks them as the mouthpiece of Christ and not as a priest endowed with a potestas offerendi pro vivis et defunctis.<sup>45</sup>

Interestingly enough Sasse holds to Luther's strict judgment over an administration by an improper person as not giving the true sacrament.<sup>46</sup> The words of institution are thus qualified by this factor in a decisive way.

In spite of the Thomistic definitions mentioned, the Roman Church has never stated dogmatically when the consecration occurs; it has no definite dogma on the "moment of consecration." The Eastern Church is perhaps clearer on this point with its doctrine of the epiclesis as the moment of change. However, neither in this Church do the dogmatic statements of the transformation of the elements specify the exact moment. The typical Greek view of the Middle Ages, going back to Cyril and Chrysostom, may be summed, regarding the words of institution, as "the powerful words of God which make the miracle of the Real Presence possible, while the coming of the Holy Spirit in response to the epiclesis makes it real."<sup>47</sup> In the early Church this division did not exist; the moment of

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<sup>45</sup>Ibid.

<sup>46</sup>H. Sasse, "Variata semper varianda," Lutherische Blätter, XXII, No. 101 (1970), 94-95; cf. H. Sasse, "An die Kirckliche Sammlung," Xerox copy, (January 1971), p. 13, holding that CA XIV is de facto set out of function by women-ordination and administration by non-ordained.

<sup>47</sup>Sasse, "Consecration," pp. 5-8, Hippolyt's Church Order regarded the epiclesis and the words of institution as a unity, while Ireneus stressed the latter. Cf. Sasse, This is, p. 171, where he observes that the modern Eastern Church regards the whole Eucharistic prayer, including the words of institution, as consecratory.



consecration was connected with the whole Eucharistic prayer, including the words of institution, as well as the epiclesis. Sasse affirms the conclusion of many Catholic theologians in modern time, who feel compelled to determine the moment of consecration as related to the Lord's own words. One stresses also the lack of any epiclesis at the first Supper.

Turning to the New Testament, Sasse stresses the importance of distinguishing between what is divine order and what is not. The liturgical freedom must be underscored. The Church of the Lutheran Reformation combined this freedom from liturgical laws with the freedom to retain whatever could be retained of the old liturgy without endangering the Gospel.<sup>48</sup> The account of the institution is the very heart of the Eucharistic liturgy. Sasse, in fact, claims that Paul's recording of it was obtained from the Antiochian liturgy. In this account, the words of Jesus himself is where the mystery of the sacrament is to be found. So it is reflected also in Lutheran liturgy.<sup>49</sup>

Sasse is not in doubt on the question of the "after-consecration." Both for Luther and for the Lutheran Church, following him, it was always certain that, "in case a new supply of bread and wine was necessary, the elements brought to the altar had to be consecrated before being

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<sup>48</sup>Ibid., pp. 11, 13.

<sup>49</sup>Ibid., p. 4, Ep. VII, 8, BS 798; cf. ibid., pp. 2-3, disclaiming the Anglican Church as having no doctrine on the consecration, not exceeding that of Confessio Helvetica.



distributed."<sup>50</sup> Luther always retained a tremendous respect for the consecrated host, and would never concede to an indifference that treated consecrated and unconsecrated element alike. The unio sacramentalis was much too serious a doctrine for that kind of attitude.

Luther did not give a doctrinal answer to the moment of consecration and duration of the Real Presence. The New Testament does not contain such a doctrine. His answer was therefore practical. Sasse observes that

He was, and this may be a surprise to many, never quite sure about the moment when the consecrated bread ceases to be the body, the consecrated wine ceases to be the blood of Christ.<sup>51</sup>

Therefore, for safety's sake, nothing should be left; the remnants should either be consumed or burned. The same deep respect is present in the Formula of Concord, which excludes all speculations and frivolous questions.<sup>52</sup>

Hardt

The consecration in the two medieval traditions may briefly be characterized as follows:<sup>53</sup> (1) the Thomistic tradition claimed the words of institution were powerful instrumental words for the coming of the Presence; (2) The Nominalistic school held to a simultaneous

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid., p. 22, WA XII, 214, WA XIX, 99, cf. Luther's misunderstanding of Paul's and Luke's text, claiming bread-distribution before consecrating the wine.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., p. 23.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., p. 24, Sol. Decl. VII, 128, BS 1016.

<sup>53</sup> Hardt, Venerabilis, p. 157.



parallelism, that as the words are uttered, God fulfills his promise and lets the miracle happen.

Hardt claims that Luther took an opposing position to both of these traditions, yet stressing primarily that the words of consecration are divine spirit-filled creator-words. The action implied by the miracle of the Presence is beyond and contrary to what is considered natural according to the orderliness of creation. This new relation of Christ's body and blood to space, is a miracle worked through the Spirit in the Word. "In his great Confession on the Supper Luther develops the doctrine of consecration as an obvious and necessary part of his doctrine on the Supper."<sup>54</sup>

The words of Christ in the Supper are creative just as God's words in Genesis 1, and the consecratory power lies on the same line as so-called nature-miracles. However, there are two aspects that Luther rejects, namely that the words as such have an inherent power that works the miracle, and that the priest has an inherent creative power. "Only Christ's authorization fills the blessing of the human voice with the power that works the miracle."<sup>55</sup> As Jesus commanded to repeat the meal, he also has the power to transfer his own right of disposition over his creation to whom he pleases. Therefore his authorization, and that only, fills the human voice with the power to work the miracle. Christ is really the one who speaks, illustrated by the pronoun "my" (body).

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<sup>54</sup>Ibid., p. 162.

<sup>55</sup>Ibid., p. 164; cf. Hardt, Om Altarets, pp. 55-56.



If, therefore, Christ's institution is violated, as in the private mass, then it is no longer Christ who speaks, and the validity of the consecration is annulled. However, Hardt does not follow Wisløff, who holds that the communion also constitutes a criterion for a correct consecration. Wisløff claims that Luther shows an inconsequence by disclaiming the Reformed celebration as valid, when it is performed according to the institution. Hardt claims the communion is not to be included in die Ordnung Christi which is necessary for a valid consecration.<sup>56</sup> Hardt therefore asserts with Luther, that a Lutheran communicant participating in a Reformed Church does not receive the true sacrament. The sacrament becomes an empty performance. "Luther, in fact, perceives of the Reformed reading of the words of institution as meaningless, and proposes mockingly instead an Ave Maria or a hymn."<sup>57</sup> Hardt therefore claims that Luther held only to one condition for a valid sacrament, namely that God's word and order not be changed. In the Reformed Supper both are changed, as the consecration is negated. This restriction does not abolish the objectivity of the sacrament, but merely points out that the validity of a matter of "religious realities, which places man under the final decision," of faith or un-belief.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>56</sup>Ibid., p. 166; Wisløff, The Gift, pp. 156-157.

<sup>57</sup>Ibid., p. 168; cf. p. 167, WA XXX, iii, 559, WA XXVI, 389, WA TR IV, 5185.

<sup>58</sup>Ibid., p. 169, Sol. Decl. VII, 32, BS 982; cf. Hardt, Om Altarets, p. 58; WA XXVI, 506, on Luther's strong accusations against the enthusiasts, that they don't consecrate; thus they have only bread and wine.



Luther does not display an inconsequence or uncertainty in treating the Reformed celebration and the Roman mass. Hardt, therefore, disagrees with both Wisløff and A. Peters, who hold that Luther never could free himself from the thought that Christ really was present in the private mass, yet unconditionally rejecting the Presence in the Reformed celebration.<sup>59</sup>

Luther did not know this distinction of dogma and theologoumenon, as here indicated. What cannot be asserted by Scripture is not to be taught. Hardt agrees with Sasse who holds that the Reformed Supper is not a sacrament of Christ!

For in those words Christ Himself speaks, and the minister would not speak "ex persona Christi," if he did not speak the words of institution, as Christ understood them and wanted them to be understood.<sup>60</sup>

On the question of accidents befalling the elements, Hardt also challenges Wisløff's assertion that somebody having received a non-consecrated host, believing it was consecrated, has nevertheless received the right sacrament. Luther's position is that the communicant in fact has been betrayed and received only bread, however he has not lost the blessing.<sup>61</sup> Faith can never substitute consecration.

In characterizing Melancthon's position, Hardt says his subjective emphasis on comfort, as the primary purpose of the words, does not exclude an objective element. Melancthon did, in fact, urge that new wine

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<sup>59</sup>Ibid., p. 170; Wisløff, The Gift, p. 172, A. Peters, Realpräsenz (Berlin: Lutherisches Verlagshaus, c.1960), p. 101.

<sup>60</sup>Ibid.; Sasse, This is, p. 372.

<sup>61</sup>Ibid., p. 171; cf. Wisløff, The Gift, p. 156, WA XXXVIII, 187.



brought in to the altar, during the celebration, should be consecrated. However, Hardt concedes that Melanchthon never could make a problem out of the use of a non-consecrated host, when eaten in good faith.<sup>62</sup> The action therefore, constituted a right consecration.

Also Brenz considered the divine will, as expressed in the institution, as constitutive for the sacrament. He was attacked by the Gnesio-Lutherans who held he had deprived the liturgical consecration of its content. He had opposed a strict verbal notion, that the consecration was bound to certain syllables, instead stressing the function. Thus he also held the after-consecration as unnecessary, but did not forbid it.<sup>63</sup>

Laurentius Petri is an interesting example in this connection. He had a very concrete concept of the Real Presence, and a high regard for the consecration, yet rejected the after-consecration. His argumentation was that the consecration had wider limits and applied also for the host not yet present on the altar.<sup>64</sup>

In summarizing, Hardt claims that the idea of a consecratory divinely authorized act, filled by Christ's own divine power, was common to Luther and to the north-German tradition, including a capacity like Chemnitz.

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<sup>62</sup>Ibid., pp. 179-180; cf. pp. 173-174.

<sup>63</sup>Ibid., pp. 182-184; p. 184 quoting Brenz: "die Kraft des Sacraments komme nicht her von einer gleichsam magischen Incantation unser Recitation, sondern weil es einmal von Christo so gethan und geboten."

<sup>64</sup>Ibid., p. 190.



The priest at the altar does not only take the creator's body by his fingers, but also speaks the creator's words with his lips. Neither the Real Presence nor the mode of bringing it about demands theological limitations as to the presence of the divine world in time and space beyond those limits that have to be set against misuse, contrary to the institution historically given. Obviously then, the creative word has the same power over the elements as over men's hearts.<sup>65</sup>

The significance of the consecration is that it distinguishes between what may be worshipped and what may not. The worship is solely directed toward the consecrated sacrament, as it exists in a certain time period, on the altar, in the hands of the priest, as it is elevated, carried and distributed. The character of the consecratory words are, according to Hardt, not that of lasting power-words, thus opposing Wislöff and J. Diestelmann. The term thettelwort, designates power-words that lose their power once uttered. While "do this" is Christ's command-word, the "this is my body" is his own action-word, working what it says. Thus as soon as Christ says his words of institution, they effect what they say. That is when the consecrated element comes into being.<sup>66</sup>

Hardt discusses the moment of consecration, and holds that Luther has probably been understood somewhat erroneously. It may seem that he sees the moment in the liturgy to be that of Our Father. Yet, analyzing the term shows that the oratio dominicae signifies the words of institution,

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<sup>65</sup>Ibid., pp. 194-195.

<sup>66</sup>Ibid., pp. 227-228; cf. Hardt, Om Altarets, p. 74, WA XIX, 491, and p. 54 for definitions: "thettelwort," an action-word not dependant on man's participation, and "heisselwort," a command-word which requires obedient performance. Cf. supra, p. 96.



translated Wort des Herrn.<sup>67</sup> This seems verified by the fact that Luther placed Our Father differently in his two orders of the mass, once before, and once after the words of institution.<sup>68</sup> Taken together with the term thetzelwort this is the only possible solution, says Hardt.

Luther regarded all indifference toward the consecration with great seriousness; it was the rationalistic mind, originating from Erasmian and Roman modernism, that eventually could only lead to the naked atheism. He urged church-discipline against those who disrespected the consecration, by treating the sacrament irreverently or by mixing non-consecrated with consecrated.<sup>69</sup>

The after-consecration was obviously a necessity for Luther. Hardt claims that "it is the upholding of such things, as for an outsider must be considered irrelevant, that the faithfulness toward the Christian revelation is tested and proved."<sup>70</sup> The resistance against elevation and adoration is also characterized as an escape from the Real Presence, the power of consecration, and the objective basis, to a pious human subjectivity.

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<sup>67</sup>Ibid., p. 234; cf. ibid. p. 228, WA Br X, 3894: "incipit ab initio orationis Dominicae."

<sup>68</sup>Ibid., p. 234, WA XII, 213 (Formula Missae 1523), WA XIX, 95 (Deutsche Messe 1526).

<sup>69</sup>Hardt, Om Altarets, p. 60; cf. ibid., p. 57, WA XXX, i, 220, WA XXIII, 69, WA TR V, 5670.

<sup>70</sup>Ibid.; cf. WA Br X, 3762; cf. ibid., p. 74.



## Adoration and Worship

Sasse

All through the Middle Ages the sacrament had a central place in the worship. However, during the latter part of that period, the mass became more and more an act of the priest alone, or the priest together with a few ministrants or possibly a few laymen. The sacrament developed from a Communion service to a performance, where the congregation became spectators. In the late twelfth century the elevation and adoration of the elements took the place of common participation. One may designate it a "holy drama," or even "communion with the eyes."<sup>71</sup>

The connection with the Real Presence is clear. It is precisely this doctrine that led to the adoration of the elements, and the reverence surrounding the preservation of them. The tabernacle, the Corpus Christi feast, and the doctrine of the transubstantiation were all important elements that added to the mystery of the mass during the thirteenth century.

Luther rejected the adoration of the consecrated host in the tabernacle or in the procession of the Corpus Christi feast. Nevertheless, Sasse points to Luther's open attitude toward the adoration. He would use terms as "honor," "bow," and "prostrate," basing them on the Old Testament terms for worshipping attitude. The open aspect of the matter is stressed by holding that neither those who practice the adoration nor

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<sup>71</sup>Sasse, This is, p. 67, Augen-communion, cf. Corpus Christi feast from 1264.



those who refrain from it would be regarded as heretics. One must, however, stress that Luther's concrete concept of the Real Presence is all decisive for his attitude toward the question of adoration.<sup>72</sup>

Sasse mentions the rejections in the last article of the Formula of Concord, including the transubstantiation and adoration of consecrated hosts. He does not, however, elaborate on the content and consequence of such a rejection. Similarly, when Luther refers to his previous "idolatrous" actions in the private mass, Sasse does not, in the denunciation of those acts see a general negative attitude toward the adoration, and certainly not toward the Real Presence. Luther's later stress of consecration as the only legitimate basis for elevation and adoration, shows that he considered these acts as appropriate. He held the elevation to be a rite inciting the faith. Luther never let go of his first exposition on the adoration of 1523, and repeated it in his last Confession of 1544.<sup>73</sup>

Sasse stresses the awesome character the miracle of the Real Presence had for Luther. The truth that "The blessed Bread is the Body of Christ also when it lies on the altar or when the Pastor holds it in his hands," made veneration and adoration a natural and necessary part of his worship.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>72</sup>Ibid., p. 106 WA XI, 445-450; cf. Sasse, Vom Sakraments, p. 145.

<sup>73</sup>Ibid., p. 173, WA LIV, 163, WA VI, 524, WA XI, 105; cf. ibid., p. 80, WA XXXVIII, 197. Cf. ibid., p. 123, on Honius, holding the Roman consecration led to adoration, and thus to idolatry.

<sup>74</sup>Sasse, "Zum lutherischen," p. 15.



In his essay "Liturgy and Lutheranism" of 1947,<sup>75</sup> Sasse states the importance and crucial understanding of the Real Presence as the center of the liturgy. The communion of believers grows up around the Holy Communion, and a Protestant liturgy will inevitably die where the mediation of the whole Christ is neglected. Placing great emphasis on the close connection between dogma and liturgy, Sasse, however, does not treat adoration and elevation in that connection. His strong liturgical basis does not necessitate advocacy of a worship of the elements. His main emphasis seems to be the intimate relation between the preached and the acted Gospel in sermon and sacrament.

To Luther the elevation was an adiaphoron as long as it could be interpreted evangelically. He retained it up to 1543, because he felt it guarded the Real Presence against Zwinglian spiritualism. However, he could also drop it, and did so, when it tended to imply Roman misconceptions. His concern was always to safeguard the sacrament. Luther never advocated an irreverent and indifferent position toward the elements.<sup>76</sup> He always retained the notion of a mysterium tremendum.

Overall, Sasse does not give much space and concern for the aspect of adoration, in his many presentations of the Real Presence.

Hardt

While medieval worship of the godhead in the sacrament was based on the concomitance, the Lutheran reaffirmation of the Cyrillian Christology

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<sup>75</sup>Sasse, "Liturgy," Una Sancta, VIII, 6-12.

<sup>76</sup>Sasse, "Consecration," pp. 22-23.



created another basis. Asserting that Christ's human nature also had part in the divine qualities, the body and blood of Christ in the sacrament could be worshipped without reservation.

Luther's position is not seriously disputed among scholars. He had a high veneration for the Real Presence and found it proper to adore it also in an outward manner. His position is, however, very often deplored by Lutheran scholars. In his On the Worship of the Sacraments of 1523, Luther treats both inner and outer worship. Inner worship presupposes faith, and is seen as the highest work toward God. The outer worship is principally an adiaphoron, but "He who believes, as has been proven how one should believe, can surely not refuse his veneration for Christ's body and blood."<sup>77</sup> As faith is decisive for all actions, so also for the adoration, and faith tends in Luther to include an element of worship.<sup>78</sup>

There are numerous testimonies to Luther's worshipping attitude. The brothers of the Anhalt nobility testified: "We have seen Luther with sincerity and veneration throw himself down on the ground and worship Christ, when the sacrament is elevated."<sup>79</sup> Hardt therefore asserts that the withdrawal of the elevation from the services in Wittenberg in 1542, was not initiated by Luther. It is true that Luther never considered the elevation necessary and could under certain circumstances both accept

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<sup>77</sup>Hardt, Om Altarets, p. 69, WA XI, 447; cf. Hardt, Venerabilis, pp. 55, 214, where the following scholars are mentioned in support of this interpretation of Luther: H. Grass, H. Sasse, A. Peters, C. F. Wilsøff.

<sup>78</sup>Ibid., p. 71, WA XI, 449; cf. supra, p. 94. Cf. ibid., p. 219, distinguishing between ehrbieten for the outward act, and ambieten as less proper for the honorary gesture; yet, cf. ibid., p. 225, WA LIV, 432: "mit allen ehren anbeten sol."

<sup>79</sup>Ibid., p. 73, WA TR, V, 5665, WA Br, X, 3849.



and defend its abolishment. Yet, one has testimonies that Luther considered the abolishment of the elevation as lessening the authority of the sacrament.

The freedom on adiaphoral matters, as the Confessions claim, also include the possibility for re-instating the elevation, when heresy threatens the Real Presence. Hardt feels this is indeed the case today, when the illwill toward the elevation often reveals itself as flight from the Real Presence and the power of the consecration.

In 1538, Melanchthon attacked the Christological parallel to the miracle of the sacrament. Yet, this understanding did not prevent him from labeling those who rejected the worship of Christ's body as Nestorians.<sup>80</sup> He felt the real Lutheran distinction between the bread and the body had not been understood, thereby leading to the so-called "bread-worship." This was a distortion of the phrase: "panis est corpus." The worship was also, according to Luther, to take place "non in panem, sed in Chritum." Therefore, rightly perceived, the elevation did not have to be offensive, but Melanchthon claimed the simple belief of people would easily lead to a localization of the object of worship. In comparing the two Reformers, Hardt holds that

Melanchthon and Luther perceive of the sacramental worship of the un-educated people quite differently. Luther identifies himself without reservation with the medieval affinity toward the Saviour in the host . . . . Melanchthon views the same people as fallen into a materialistic bread-worship.<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>80</sup>Hardt, Venerabilis, p. 141.

<sup>81</sup>Ibid., p. 145, Melanchthon also rejected adoration in Baptism, which Luther would open for.



Hardt observes that Brenz's heavy attack on the transubstantiation, in fact, strikes the outward character of Luther's adoration and worship as well. To him these things were Aristotelian and abhorrent.

The worship is based, not on a localization of the godhead to the flesh, but on the exaltation of this latter to the worthiness of worship, says Hardt. Luther's main point is the personal union of Christ. The adoration of Christ's body only affirms this union, and does not allow for notions that the godhead is confined to the body.<sup>82</sup> Hardt claims this to be a main characteristic of Luther, that he nowhere developed a distinction between the element and Christ's body.

God in his omnipotence is the object of worship. Luther points to this in his Genesis-commentary, holding that God chooses for himself the means of revelation.<sup>83</sup> Right and false worship is determined by whether God has chosen the element or place worshipped as his place of revelation. In the Supper he has given us such a place.

The fact that Luther regarded adoration as an adiaphoron does not imply that he permits both adherence and rejection of adoration as permissible opinions within the Church. No one may dogmatically dispute the legitimacy of the sacramental worship. This seems to be unconditional. The adiaphoron is limited to the outward form of worship.

Hardt engages in a discussion with Wislöff on the relation between adoration and faith in Luther. Wislöff's position seems referred to

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<sup>82</sup> Ibid., pp. 205-206; cf. supra, p. 60. Cf. *ibid.*, p. 212, on L. Petri as a typical example of Luther's position of the personal union leading to adoration.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid., p. 217, *IA* XLIII, 9.



correctly. He "sees the adoration and its most pregnant expression, the elevation, as an erratic block in Luther's sacramental outlook."<sup>84</sup> Wisløff maintains that Luther betrays himself and his principle of justification by faith alone, by holding the adoration to be necessary. Hardt holds that Wisløff here separates justification by faith from the highest work of faith, the adoration. He rejects making justification by faith an overarching principle, and claims Wisløff regards this principle differently from Luther. It qualifies the Christian action, but has no systematic, regulating function. "Wisløff's use of justification and forgiveness of sin as the sacramental gift, in opposition to its worship . . . belongs with the Melanchthonian camp."<sup>85</sup> Luther's Anfechtung over the fact that he once worshipped an invalidly consecrated sacrament in the private mass, presupposes, that a right consecrated sacrament can be worshipped.

In the act of elevation two concerns of Luther coincide, namely that of worship and that of preaching the Real Presence. Against Wisløff, Hardt holds that this is no contradiction. The outward act is by Luther, in Deutsche Messe of 1526, regarded as a reminder of Christ's heavenly sacrifice.<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>84</sup>Ibid., p. 221, Wisløff, The Gift, p. 182.

<sup>85</sup>Ibid., p. 222; cf. p. 224, WA XVIII, 191: "den leyb und blut Christi eren wyr ym brod"; cf. WA XXXVIII, 197.

<sup>86</sup>Ibid., p. 226, "himmelska offergång," implying not an act in heaven, but Christ coming from heaven to earth. Cf. pp. 32-33, strongly rejecting R. Prenter's sacrificial notions, "dynamic perception" of the sacrifice, as eternally present, R. Prenter, Skabelse og Genløsning (Copenhagen: G. E. C. Gads Forlag, 1971), pp. 536, 550.



In the early Melanchthon one can find the elevation ascribed a function of the proclamation. However, it is not regarded as a sacramental act, and occurs before the consecration. From 1538 it is clearly rejected as a part of the sacramental act, and toward the end of his life he became extremely critical toward the Gnesio-Lutherans, designating them as "heathen" and "idolators." This was perhaps especially aimed at the liturgical addition initiated by A. Musculus, the so-called "ostentation."

While the Gnesio-Lutherans held to the Christian freedom, making possible not only the worship and elevation, but also other items in the cult, men like Bugenhagen, who abolished the elevation in Wittenberg in 1542, were concerned about the crass forms of the cult.<sup>88</sup>

Hardt claims it is not correct to see Johann Gerhard and the 1600-Orthodoxy as the culmination of materialization of the sacrament. They rather express the opposite view. The evidence of time and space was considered Roman Catholic, even though it actually existed also in Luther and in earlier Lutheranism. Hardt holds that probably no one guarded the Lutheran position as did Georg III of Anhalt. His concern for the questions of adoration and the extra usum is reflected in his personal letters to Luther. His descriptions of the sacramental worship and the mystery of the Real Presence is, according to Hardt, sanctioned by N. Selnecker, T. Kirchner and M. Chemnitz in Histori dess

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<sup>88</sup> Ibid., pp. 251, 258, items permitted: pictures, candles, bells, kneeling and prostration.



Sacramentsstreits.<sup>89</sup> Georg's defense for the sacramental worship was brought out by Selneccer, two years after the Formula of Concord, in order to authorize the new Confession. The adoration is an accepted fact in both of the writings, and the elevation, being an adiaphoron, also permissible.

In his Repetitio sanae doctrinae of 1561, Chemnitz professes to Luther's word on the legitimacy of worshipping the Eucharist, although he rejects the papists' "bread-worship" outside the use. The adoration is considered in his Examen Concilii Tridentini of 1565 as extra controversariam, and the rejection in the Formula of Concord, of Reformed accusations of "bread-worship" and Capernaitic practices, also seems to be based on Chemnitz.<sup>90</sup>

Brenz on the other hand posed a contradiction between "bread-worship" and "Christ-worship," and J. Andreae distinguished between worshipping Christ in the sacrament and worshipping the sacrament itself. Andreae held Luther's position, as well as that of the Formula of Concord, to be one of veneration and reverence, but not adoration. He himself denounced any physical act of worship toward a physical object as idolatry. Hardt claims fervently that this is contrary to Luther's intention.

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<sup>89</sup> Ibid., pp. 269, 271, referring to p. 541 of mentioned writing of 1521: "Wir wollen nichts zu thun haben mit denen, welche . . . das hochwürdige Sacrament / ja Christum im Sacrament anzubieten für eine Abgötterey halten." Cf. p. 273.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid., pp. 276, 278, Sol. Decl. VII, 126, BS 1016, Ep. VII, 40, BS 803 where rejected: "Externa visibilibus elementa panis et vini in sacramento adorando esse." Cf. Chemnitz, p. 321: "adoratio non est dirigenda ad terrena elementa, panem et vinum, sed ad Christum deum et hominem."



Luther always spoke of an outward act to be accompanied by an inner worship, thus never isolating the outward worship, even though stressing it.<sup>91</sup>

### Altar-fellowship

Sasse

Sasse claims that all the Christological dogmas are closely linked together. Denial of one is not an isolated heretical tendency, but leads to a basic heresy, where denial of other articles of faith is inevitable. Furthermore, "for Luther the denial of the Real Presence was a heresy destructive to the Church."<sup>92</sup> This concept of heresy, and the consciousness of an anti-Christian force ever present, undermines all attempts of unity where this denial is present. Fallen mankind is characterized by its refusal to accept the external word and the external means of grace, and by developing its own religion, which places man where God alone has the right to stand.

This position is also stressed by the fact that Luther, when urged to go to Marburg, in order to achieve a common Protestant basis in the political and ecclesiastical struggles, made it plain that he went as a confessor and not as a negotiator. His position on the sacramental Presence was beyond discussion. Sasse observes that there was no common

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<sup>91</sup>Ibid., pp. 280-283; cf. WA XI, 449, Luther rejected a nur eusserlich anbeten."

<sup>92</sup>Sasse, This is, p. 189, cf. p. 191.



celebration of the sacrament in Marburg, although the problem of altar-fellowship as we understand it did not exist, since all still were Catholic Christians.<sup>93</sup>

Upon Bucer's direct request to be accepted as orthodox, Luther could not but decline to do so:

I am neither your Lord, nor your judge, nor your teacher. Your spirit and our spirit cannot go together. Indeed, it is quite obvious that we do not have the same spirit. For there cannot be one and the same spirit where on one side the words of Christ are accepted in sincere faith, and on the other side this faith is criticized, attacked, denied, and spoken of with frivolous blasphemies. Therefore, as I have told you, we commend you to the judgment of God. Teach as you think you can defend it in the sight of God.<sup>94</sup>

Luther's attitude may be summed up, as he did in a letter to his wife on the last day of the Colloquy:

Charity and peace we owe even to our enemies. They were told, to be sure, that in case they should fail to come to their senses concerning this article they might enjoy our charity, but could not be regarded by us as brethren and members of Christ.<sup>95</sup>

The question separating them is an article of faith, therefore it cannot be treated lightly. Luther refused the right hand of fellowship to Zwingli, as well as the name of brother.

Sasse claims the Reformed view of Protestantism as a bloc opposed to the Roman Church is an oversimplification. There are two borders. What for the Zwinglians was the difference of theological schools of

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<sup>93</sup>Ibid., pp. 215, 218; cf. p. 229 Luther present at Marburg only in an effort to show his opponents their error.

<sup>94</sup>Ibid., pp. 265-266.

<sup>95</sup>Ibid., p. 274, WA Br V, 1477.



thought, which might be tolerated within one and the same Church, was for Luther the difference between Church and heresy. There is therefore no doubt that Luther regarded deniers of the bodily presence of Christ in the bread, as heretics with whom there could be no fellowship. He even compares this heresy with Arianism. Although he would admit that remnants of the true Church are to be found also in heretical circles, that could never justify a communicatio in sacris. Therefore, in accordance with the Ancient Church, heretics and schismatics were not to be admitted to the Sacrament of the Altar.<sup>96</sup>

Sasse stresses that this concept of "closed communion" also is that of the old Reformed Church. Advocates of "open communion" can therefore not appeal to Zwingli, because he did not consider the Real Presence an article of faith, but an opinion that could be tolerated within the same church, without raising the question of heresy.

Concerning the condemnations in the Lutheran Confessions, Sasse observes that they keep the same principle as Luther, namely distinction between the heresies themselves and the members of the churches that taught these heresies. The condemnations are primarily aimed at the teaching and preaching positions, rather than the simple believers. One must in all seriousness uphold

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<sup>96</sup>Ibid., pp. 290-291; W. Elert, Eucharist and Church Fellowship in the First Four Centuries (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, c.1966), p. 167. Cf. H. Sasse, "Confessional Churches in the Ecumenical Movement," Springfielder, XXXI (1967), 8.



the principle that church and altar-fellowship can be practiced only where a consensus on the truth of the Gospel and on the Sacraments of Christ has been reached.<sup>97</sup>

Sasse holds that the Lutheran quest for truth also is a quest for unity. The two are inseparable.

Observing the tendency of rationalism within churches today, Sasse remarks that the Lutheran Church, in contrast to the Reformed and the Anglican Church, have so far retained its historical Confessions. However, he questions the sincerity of adherence and asks whether it is just a matter of time, due to conservatism, before Lutheranism also drops the historical Confessions.<sup>98</sup> The unity of the Church lies not in organization or structure, but in the faith. The right preaching of the Gospel and administration of the sacraments are therefore related to the understanding implied, not merely the performance of these rites.

Sasse questions the unity of Reformed churches. Was the Consensus Tigurinus a true expression of a unity in faith, doctrine and confession, or was it rather a church-political compromise? Sasse seems to imply the latter. Present Reformed consensus on the Supper is, as in the sixteenth century, rather in the negative than in the positive, that is, what the words of institution do not mean, rather than what they do mean. When therefore criticism today is raised against so-called Lutheran

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<sup>97</sup> Ibid., p. 334; cf. H. Sasse, Here We Stand (New York: Harper & Brothers, c.1938), p. 126, WA XVIII, 652, on true believers outside known circles.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid., p. 349; cf. H. Sasse, "Are We Forfeiting Our Heritage," Christianity Today, X (October 22, 1965), 19, where he sees the Church of the Reformation perish in old Lutheran countries, exemplified by doctrinal indifference on the theological faculties, women-ordination, moral relativism, existentialism, to mention the most aggravating ones.



"misunderstanding" of Calvin's standpoint, Sasse claims it is caricatured, as well as it neglects to distinguish between Calvin's and Zwingli's position.<sup>99</sup> Furthermore it is motivated by an ideal concept of one unified Church, unionism being a characteristic trait of the Reformed Church.

Sasse does, however, compromise this absolute stand somewhat by stating that one must not overlook the strange unity that underlies all the contradictory confessions and binds together these confessions. The tragedy of our day is that the Christian faith of the Reformation is being replaced by undogmatic Christianity, which in essence is non-existent. The appeal to lex orandi as lex credendi is only acceptable if it may be reversed. "Nothing is correct in the liturgy and the worship of the Church, that is not doctrinally correct."<sup>100</sup>

Sasse pleads that the refusal of Church and Communion-fellowship with the Reformed must not be understood as a violation of Christian love and as confessional obstinacy. It must be seen as obedience to the eternal truth of Scripture, and an act of Seelsorge toward those who do not share the literal understanding of the words of institution. Unionistic efforts have, according to Sasse, in most cases hurt both Reformed and Lutheran churches; they have "ruined legitimate and necessary polemics."<sup>101</sup> One is therefore today farther away from unity than the

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<sup>99</sup>Sasse, Vom Sakraments, pp. 185-186, referring specifically to H. Gollwitzer in his Coena Domini, 1937.

<sup>100</sup>Sasse, "Are We," Christianity Today, X, 20-21.

<sup>101</sup>H. Sasse, "On the Problem of the Relation Between the Reformed and Lutheran Church," Theological Quarterly, XLVI (1949), 241, 232.



"Fathers" were, who engaged in polemics in an effort to clarify truth and error.

Sasse's strong opposition to Barth and his Barmen-declaration was not motivated out of a conservative political attitude or indifference. He did not oppose an action among theologians and church leaders to challenge the ethics of the Nazi-regime. On the contrary, he urged such action and took a firm stand himself. What he deplored, however, was the confessional character it developed. The sacramental theology was declared not to be of any hindrance to a unified proclamation, which then was included in the ordination confessions. Sasse claims that the Barmen-declaration was no different from the Prussian Union a century before.<sup>102</sup> Sasse claims it has created confusion as to the concept of an evangelical Church. Neither Deutsche Evangelische Kirche, resulting from the Barmen-declaration and K. Barth's efforts, nor the Bekennende Kirche is a Church in the proper sense of the term.

The declaration of 1934 is only an ethical statement, in which status it may be upheld. But for a Lutheran it is inconceivable to have a confessional document which dissolves the differences of the sixteenth century as unessential, and not church-devisive. This includes the Christology of The Lord's Supper. The question of truth is regarded as secondary, under the question of usefulness.<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>102</sup>H. Sasse, In Statu Confessionis (Berlin: Lutherisches Verlagshaus, c.1966), pp. 283-285; cf. H. Sasse, "Zur Frage des Abendmahlsgespiels," Igreja Luterana, XIX (1958), 143.

<sup>103</sup>Cf. Gerhard Niemöller, Die erste Bekenntnis-synode der Deutschen Evangelischen Kirche zu Barmen (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1959), pp. 171-176, to Sasse's critique of the Barmen-declaration.



Sasse sees Barth's attempts in the 1930's being carried on in the new Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland of 1948, where the confessional contradictions are sought dissolved. Even in an organization like Lutheran World Federation, Sasse asserts that the phrasing of the sacramental presence is left open.<sup>104</sup> He can only, sadly, observe that the altar-fellowship between Lutherans and Reformed is a fait accompli today, with the exception of a few churches.

The most serious effort toward inter-communion is the Arnoldshain Theses. The compromise-character of the result was not to be hindered by Lutheran representatives as P. Brunner and E. Schlink. Sasse deplors the latter's subjection to ecumenical influence. That W. Elert and Sasse himself declined the invitation to participate, and that E. Sommerlath refused to accept the result, are strong indications of the compromise.<sup>105</sup>

In his treatment of the theses, Sasse concludes that the "Lutherans have given up the doctrine that the consecrated bread is the body of Christ and the consecrated wine is the blood of Christ."<sup>106</sup> Sasse claims they are in conformity neither with Luther's nor with the Heidelberg Catechism, compromising to both sides.

Likewise, the Marburg Revisited and later ecumenical dialogues in the United States display a new philosophy, alien to that of the Reformers

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<sup>104</sup>Sasse, "Zur Frage," Igreja Luterana XIX, 146; cf. Sasse, "Confessional Churches," Springfielder XXXI, 2-34, for a general critique of LWF's basis and confessional character.

<sup>105</sup>H. Sasse, "What is the Sacrament of the Altar?," The Springfielder XXXII (1968), 10.

<sup>106</sup>Ibid., XXXII, 11, referring to the term of Augustana Variata: "with the bread" in thesis 4; cf. Sasse, "Variata," Lutherische Blätter, XXII, No. 101, 98.



on either side. One does not ask any more: "What is truth?" Rather the philosophy of dynamic categories replace what is regarded as static, substantial thinking. This philosophy produces a new theology. It has freed man from the ontological skandalon of the words of our Lord, when "substance" or "matter" is perceived of. Sasse does not deny the use of philosophical systems, but he claims they have to be examined.

Christian theology can make use of many different philosophical systems, using what truth is contained in each of them. But it should never be married to one system, which happens to be in fashion at the time.<sup>107</sup>

The position of the Lutheran churches today therefore must be that of Luther in his final offer at the Marburg Colloquy, that the words of Christ must be accepted in simple faith, leaving the "how" to God. One does not have to be a Lutheran to believe in the Real Presence, but that doctrine nevertheless remains a criterion for common basis. Sasse strongly rejects the policy of modern union churches, as for example, that of South India, where the requirements for the liturgy and for the acceptance of the minister are stated, but leaving the understanding of the Presence of Christ and the gift of the sacrament to the individual minister and communicant.<sup>108</sup>

Sasse considers the many conferences and attempts to bring the confessional churches to a closer harmony, as totally in vain. Unless "the only judge, rule, and norm," that is, Holy Scripture, is rediscovered, there is no solution ahead. When the New Testament no longer

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<sup>107</sup>Ibid., XXXII, 19, cf. p. 20.

<sup>108</sup>H. Sasse, "A Lutheran Contribution to the Present Discussion on the Lord's Supper," Concordia Theological Monthly, XXX (1959), 20, 24-25.



has one unified teaching on the sacrament, all discussions are bound to be futile.

Sasse points, nevertheless, to the ancient liturgical practices, such as we find in Didache, where the petition for the unity and purity of the Church is a part of the sacramental prayers. The symbolism of the many grains that make up the one loaf is likewise to illustrate the nature of the Lord's Supper as the sacramentum unitatis.<sup>109</sup> This petition will always belong to the essence of true evangelical and divine worship.

For Sasse, church-fellowship is also altar-fellowship. This follows necessarily from the nature of the Church as a corporate body worshipping and serving together. The one cannot be present without the other. Thus, no genuine fellowship is possible where people cannot gather around the same altar, in common understanding of what this sacrament is.<sup>110</sup> Where this common understanding, which must be established on common confessional basis, is lacking, one must simply abstain from any altar-fellowship in either direction, that is both in receiving and administering. One cannot cover up the concept of heresy and schism by a general Christian brotherly love.

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<sup>109</sup>H. Sasse, "Ecclesia Crans," Theological Quarterly, XLVIII (1951), 92-93.

<sup>110</sup>Sasse, In Statu, p. 115; cf. pp 115-120, Sasse's eleven theses on Church and Altar-Fellowship from 1937.



Aalen

The point of departure for Aalen is the Lutheran position, according to Augustana VII and X. He claims that it excludes altar-fellowship with other confessions, and that such a fellowship is incompatible with the concept of the unity of the Church.<sup>111</sup>

Aalen's principal objection toward the ordo salutis theology, and pietism's unification of spiritualism and Lutheranism, is that they undermine the monergistic basis of justification by faith. This dissolving of the evangelical Lutheran heritage is seen today in the inclinations toward "evangelical" alliance-Christianity, and other enthusiastic ecumenical efforts.<sup>112</sup> Aalen sees these tendencies as undermining the confessional Lutheran position, and the ecumenical movements of our century have accelerated this tendency by their growing realization of interconfessional tablefellowship.

Aalen greatly applauds Sasse's counter-efforts in the 1930's by criticizing the Barmen-declaration and the unionistic efforts. He points to the fact that the Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland sees itself as a prolongation of the Wittenberg Concord, a contention which Aalen totally rejects. The Wittenberg Concord maintains the Real Presence of Christ's body and blood in the Supper, and is referred to in the Formula of Concord.<sup>113</sup>

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<sup>111</sup> Aalen, Grunnriss, p. 101; cf. supra, pp. 42-50.

<sup>112</sup> Leiv Aalen, "Upopulaere Trossannheter," mimeographed unpublished lectures (Oslo: Menighetsfakultetet, 1969), p. 56; cf. Leiv Aalen, "Nyprotestantisk økumenisme," Tidsskrift for Teologi og Kirke, XLIII (1972), 86-87.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid., p. 57, Sol. Decl. VII, 38, BS 984.



On the other side, the Arnoldshain Theses is a completely unacceptable compromise to this. When the Christological basis of the Real Presence, as presented in the sixteenth century, is considered untenable both of exegetical and ontological reasons, Aalen asserts that this new development is a denial of the Reformation theology itself. It is correct that the Lutheran Church does not require anything other than a doctrinal consensus to achieve church and altar-fellowship, but one must stress that this consensus also must be present. This consensus is not necessarily identified with a common confession, but lies in the actual proclamation of the Gospel in accordance with the Biblical testimony, and in the sacramental administration in accordance with Christ's institution. Only in the next stage does common confession come into consideration. The evangelical praedicatio identica thus becomes the criterion for a legitimate participation in the altar-fellowship.<sup>114</sup>

Although confessions such as the Heidelberg Catechism and the Confessio Scoticana, both stress Christ's presence in realistic terminology, it all amounts to a spiritual presence in analogy with the presence in the Word, and nothing more. One does not get beyond the extra calvinisticum, which in turn shows how decisive the incarnation theology is.<sup>115</sup>

In comparing the Halle Theses of 1937 with the Arnoldshain Theses of 1957, Aalen observes that in the latter one admits to the necessity of

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<sup>114</sup>Ibid., pp. 59, 61; cf. supra, p. 48.

<sup>115</sup>Leiv Aalen, Ord og Sakrament (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, c.1966), p. 72, cf. p. 248 on Gollwitzer's position.



some doctrinal consensus before a fellowship can be established. The Halle Theses disclaimed all previous conflicts as irrelevant, and held that the fellowship was based "nicht in unserer Erkenntnis des Abendmahls, sondern in der Gnade dessen, der der Herr des Abendmahls ist."<sup>116</sup>

While the Reformed and United churches seem pleased with the Arnoldshain Theses, strong objections have been voiced from Lutheran circles, especially to the crucial sacramental thesis four. Aalen claims it is obvious that the Heidelberg faculty with P. Brunner, E. Schlink, and G. Bornkamm, in the final formulation of that thesis, had to give in for demands from Bonn, represented by men like H. Gollwitzer and E. Bizer.

The tragic character of the theses was that the crucial point of the Real Presence was not sufficiently clarified when the discussions ended. The identity of the incarnate Christ with the sacramental Christ is not clearly stated, thus the theses are welcomed by those who reject the Real Presence. Those who hold on to the Biblical basis may want to give as positive an interpretation as possible, but one cannot expect them to accept the theses as legitimate doctrinal expressions. The attempt of inter-confessional consensus is just as impossible today as in the time of the Reformation.

A truce between old enemies on the question of the Real Presence cannot be achieved through a formula, which rather covers up the

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<sup>116</sup>Ibid., p. 244, cf. pp. 246-247; cf. Gottfried Niemeier, editor, Lehrgespräch über das Heilige Abendmahl (München: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, c.1961), pp. 112-113, where Brunner admits to the compromise of the final formulations, but still feels he can apply them to the Real Presence; cf. supra, pp. 49-50.



divergencies. It is self-deceptive to believe that contradictions thereby are brought to an end. The only possibility, according to Aalen, lies in a common Scripturally based study, which cannot but result in acceptance of Christ's bodily presence.<sup>117</sup>

Aalen characterizes the Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland as an administration-union,<sup>118</sup> also on the question of the Supper. Since the Vereinigte Evangelisch-Lutherische Kirche Deutschlands also recognizes the possibility for an open communion, Aalen is not willing to consider it an undangerous move, but rather a first step toward full altar and church-fellowship. Aalen strongly opposes the policy of V. Vajta who here seems to reckon with a practical consensus without common confession, or even across clear divergencies. This attitude can only be attributed to some sort of ecclesiastical "common sense," which is the inevitable consequence of union-policy.

One has to be aware of the fundamental difference between Lutheranism and Reformed evaluation of controversies as being church-divisive. Lutheranism's church-definition, Augustana VII, makes basic divergencies on the sacramental theology divisive. This is a matter of the integrity of the Church, that no fellowship is possible with those regarded as heretics. This is also the position of the early Church.

Aalen claims this position is completely left when it is declared that the differences are "complementary rather than contradictory," or

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<sup>117</sup> Ibid., p. 258; cf. Leiv Aalen, "Der Kampf um das Evangelium im Abendmahl," Theologische Literaturzeitung, XCI (1966), 91, 99-100.

<sup>118</sup> Leiv Aalen, "Luthersk teologi og Kirke idag," Tidsskrift for Teologi og Kirke, XXXIX (1968), 263 "forvaltnings-union."



when the Law-Gospel relation is characterized as non-controversial, and non-divisive.<sup>119</sup> The particulae exclusivae of the Reformation is violated by the Leuenberg Concord, when it holds that both conversion and new obedience are parts of justification.

When the Formula of Concord is being rejected as relevant for today's deliberations between Lutherans and Reformed, one tends to forget that this confession is a result of the concern about crypto-Calvinism creeping into the Lutheran Church. No reformatory basis is possible where this confrontation is ignored.<sup>120</sup> The final consequence of this unionistic attempt is full inter-celebration even without common doctrinal consensus. This is the seriousness of the situation, according to Aalen.

The Leuenberg Concord cannot, therefore, be considered a concord, but a confessional union, to be perceived of as a hermeneutical norm for the traditional confessions. Aalen does not follow P. Brunner in trying to modify or change the formulations, because he considers the intention itself, of the Concord, to be false. He applauds the so-called Ratzeburger Theses in their critique of Leuenberg.<sup>121</sup>

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<sup>119</sup> Aalen, "Nyprotestantisk," Tidsskrift, XLIII, 82, 101, cf. Leuenberg Concord, sections 15, 16, 39; cf. Marburg Revisited pt. 23.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid., XLIII, 189-191.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid., XLIII, 197-199, Ratzeberger Thesen zur Leuenberger Konkordie, adopted on a German-Scandinavian conference 24-28. May 1972:  
 "(1) Die 'Leuenberger Konkordie' löst die Geltung der Bekenntnisse auf.  
 (2) Die 'Leuenberger Konkordie' bringt das Evangelium nicht völl zur Geltung. (3) Die 'Leuenberger Konkordie' verbalisiert das Sakrament.  
 (4) Die 'Leuenberger Konkordie' verfälscht das Verständnis der einen heiligen Kirche."



When the traditional orthodox Lutheranism today is caricatured also in circles such as Lutheran World Federation, Aalen asserts it is because one does not distinguish between dogma and dogmatics, or between confession and theology. The validity of the confessions is not bound to its system or theology as such, but lies in its doctrinal decisions.<sup>122</sup>

When the Leuenberg Concord is described as the road from damnamus to consensus,<sup>123</sup> Aalen asserts it shows the real character of the document, namely that of theological manipulation and church politics, as the art of achieving the "possible."

Aalen describes the main tendency, or influence, going through the unionistic attempts from the Barmen-declaration of 1934, through the founding of the Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland, and up through the Arnoldshain Theses to the present Leuenberg Concord, as one of "dynamic Neo-protestantism."<sup>124</sup> This has also resulted in a so-called "dynamic Lutheranism," where the Confessions of the sixteenth century are considered antiquated or as mere style of thinking, which today is out-dated. This dynamism has the traits of Reformed spiritualism, where the sacramental doctrine is considered non-divisive. Aalen sees this as fatal to the existence of a Scripturally based Church. The objective structure of

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<sup>122</sup>Ibid., XLIII, 206-207, cf. p. 204.

<sup>123</sup>Leiv Aalen, "Unionistisk kirke- og teologipolitikk," Tidsskrift for Teologi og Kirke, XLIV (1973), 241, referring to a reaction from VELKD, in Lutherische Monatshefte No. 5 (1973), pp. 235-236.

<sup>124</sup>Ibid., XLIV, 251.



justification is sought, overcome by a situational reinterpretation of the Biblical concept of salvation.<sup>125</sup>

Gustav Wingren's ecumenical position is strongly rejected by Aalen, who characterizes him as the "godfather" of the indecisive and confusing stand toward Augustana VII which was taken in Evian 1970 by the Lutheran World Federation. Wingren has been urging that the Baptismal recognition must open for recognition also of the Sacrament of the Altar, holding that Augustana VII only stresses the functional unity, and not the doctrinal consensus.<sup>126</sup>

This position is clearly present in Leuenberg where not a new Confession is sought for, but rather a functional unity opening for recognition and ultimately inter-celebration.<sup>127</sup> The contradiction is plain, according to Aalen, since one simultaneously also speaks of a confessional basis for the individual churches. That is virtually impossible. One cannot simultaneously confess to Christ's bodily presence in the sacrament and also adhere to a Concord which rejects this, or at best, claims it is unimportant to explicate it.

This is the unionistic game of Augustana Variata of 1540, and is just as irreconcilable with the Augustana of 1530 and the other Confessions up to the Formula of Concord, as it is with confessional Lutheranism today. A categorical "no" to Leuenberg is, for Aalen, the only solution,

<sup>125</sup> Ibid., XLIV, 252-253; cf. Aalen's marked distinction between justification as such, and the Gospel message, supra, p. 91.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid., XLIV, 257; cf. Aalen, "Nyprotestantisk," Tidsskrift XLIII, 204.

<sup>127</sup> Cf. Leuenberg Concord sections 37, 33, and 30, cf. Aalen, "Unionistisk," Tidsskrift XLIV, 258.



because the whole document is stamped by the "betraying spirit" of compromise.<sup>128</sup>

Hardt

Although Hardt does not treat the present heading separately and thoroughly, his judgment is clear. Presenting the Real Presence as the status controversiae, he denies present-day unionistic tendencies, where one seeks to unite the "presence" of Christ's body with its "absence." As this is impossible, so it is also impossible to unite Lutheranism with the denial of the sacramental Presence.<sup>129</sup>

Hardt finds P. Brunner's example and position to the Arnoldshain Theses illustrating. Here, a man, considered a defender of the Real Presence, seeks a union with sacramental deniers of modernistic Calvinistic type.<sup>130</sup> This disregard, or disrespect, for the miracle of consecration is for Hardt a logical impossibility, by way of definition.

He opens for union only through a "unified worship and unified adoration before the holy element."<sup>131</sup> The strong emphasis on the validity of the consecration, requires the confession of it, and results in a denial of the Presence, when administered by a Reformed.

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<sup>128</sup> Aalen, "Unionistisk," Tidsskrift, XLIV, 264.

<sup>129</sup> Hardt, Om Altarets, p. 53.

<sup>130</sup> Ibid., p. 61, footnote 4. He finds also the orthodox part of American Lutherism to show the same disregard for the importance of the consecration. He does not specify who he is aiming at.

<sup>131</sup> Ibid., p. 84, "element" must be implied in the expression "det heliga."



Therefore, a unified celebration is nonsensical, and merely an empty ritual, where consensus on the crucial issue is lacking. When God's order and command is violated, through the Reformed understanding, the sacrament is not performed according to the institution, and therefore is invalid.<sup>132</sup> For Hardt the Sacrament of the Altar is non-existent in the Reformed Church. How can you then have fellowship?

#### Summary

All three of our contributors agree on the centrality of the use of the sacrament. However, they stress that the "use" signifies the whole action not the mere sumption. Aalen rejects any static concept of an element on the altar, but does not elaborate on this. We, therefore, can only infer that he would reject any form of sacramental notion outside of the limited use, that is distribution and reception. Sasse also stresses the action in a wider sense, but maintains that the elements "become" the body and blood of Christ, and thus rejects every kind of Melancthonian spiritualization, which he claims destroys the sacrament.

Hardt is the most explicit of the three, stressing the creative capacity of the words, in bringing into being a new reality. This resting reality is independent of both words and action. For Luther, action, or use, was not constitutive for the Real Presence, but rather the institution. When elements are being used extra-sacramentally, they are no longer sacraments because it violates the institution, not because the use constitutes a necessary factor. This is not mere logical rhetoric for Hardt. He

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<sup>132</sup>Hardt, Venerabilis, pp. 167-169; cf. supra, p. 123.



rejects the Melanchthonian trend that shows disrespect for the reliqua, and demands that the remnants be burned. However, one should show utmost care, not to permit such events to happen. Hardt seems closest to Luther's high regard for the Real Presence, both in the mysterious and concrete sense.

Sasse claims Luther regarded the words as forma, creating the materia. While Hardt would also stress the words as Spirit-filled creator-words, he dismisses the term forma as unsuitable. In stead the words are said to create a resting reality, as that of God's words in Genesis 1. He claims the consecratory words cause a miracle, which is no different in principle than nature-miracles. It is Christ's authority that fills the words with power. Both reject their effect if spoken by an improperly called person. This disqualifies not only lay administration; but also Reformed celebration. Hardt stresses perhaps strongest the non-validity of Reformed celebration, on the basis that it violates Christ's institution.

Both stress Luther's enormous respect for the consecration, consequently also for the remnant after the celebration. It should not be used for domestic purposes, but disposed of otherwise. After-consecration is also a necessity for both. The only difference seems to be that Hardt holds the consecration legitimizes worship. Consecration says what may be worshipped and what may not.

Sasse points to the tendencies of the late Middle Ages where the celebration became more and more a "holy drama," the elevation and adoration playing a decisive role. Luther maintained an open attitude toward this inheritance. Sasse elaborates little on Luther's rejection of the



adoration of the element in the tabernacle and in processions, as to the principle behind that. His emphasis is the cautious assertion that Luther did not reject adoration. In Sasse's own production on liturgy and the Real Presence, we find little mention of worship and adoration. His position seems to be one of veneration, yet unspecified.

Hardt, on the contrary, very strongly stresses the legitimacy and necessity of adoration, as possible only because of the consecration. Luther could not have initiated the abolishment of the elevation, which cannot be regarded as "an erratic block" in his theology. Hardt even claims that today a reinstatement of elevation is highly recommendable, because of the lack of belief in the Real Presence. The elevation combines two important aspects, namely the proclamation of the Real Presence, and the worship of Christ as true God.

Is there then any possibility of fellowship with other confessions for these three Lutheran theologians?

All three deny this strongly. Hardt is most categorical in stating that "absence" and "presence" cannot be harmonized. Where the sacrament really is non-existent, as he says it is in the Reformed Church, how can there be fellowship? For him union is possible only through unified worship and adoration of the Real Present Christ.

Aalen argues along the same lines, claiming it is a matter of integrity of the Church, when the Real Presence is stressed. In this respect neither the Arnoldshain Theses nor the Leuenberg Concord solves the problem, because they hide the differences, and are thus deceptive. Union requires a common confessional basis, Aalen claims, therefore he



criticizes strongly so-called alliance-Christianity and proclaims a categorical "no" to Leuenberg.

Sasse, in the same manner, sees the denial of the Real Presence as a church-devisive and destructive heresy. He points to how Luther could not accept Zwingli and Bucer as brethren at the Marburg Colloquy. As deniers of the Real Presence are defined as heretics, one can have no fellowship with them.

Sasse is however, the only one who makes a slight compromise. He recognizes a common, overarching Christian heritage across differing confessions, and the need for serious encounters on Scriptural basis. However, he does not elaborate further on it. Heresy cannot be covered up by general Christian brotherly love, he maintains.

None of the three discusses seriously the problem toward Lutherans of Melancthonian convictions. However, they would also seem to be hit by the confessional stand of our contributors, as heretical and thus outside of fellowship.



## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSION

We will first, briefly, present the main principles that all three seem to stress, then proceed to raise a few questions we feel are unanswered or may be disputed.

The Lord's Supper is unintelligible from a dogmatic viewpoint if one separates it from Incarnation-theology. Our three contributors, Hermann Sasse, Leiv Aalen, and Tom Hardt, all stress this point, going back to Cyrilian Christology. Furthermore, they view Luther's theology in close relation to the nominalistic terminology on the modes of presence. Luther's indebtedness to, and utilization of, those philosophical or theological terms are obvious and admitted by all three. Tom Hardt makes most of the difference between Thomas and Ockham, only the latter being concrete or "materialistic" in the true sense of the word. Luther in the final step leaves both by combining the repletive and circumscriptive presence, positively stating that Christ was concretely present precisely because he had God's omnipresent quality.

The fundamental role of the Words of Institution, taken in their literal sense, is urged strongly by all three. Literal exegesis is still valid, and cannot be dismissed by merely referring to modern scholarship. This literal interpretation is in fact what also guarantees the gift of the Supper, namely forgiveness of sins and eternal life, as explicated in the "given and shed for you." The Sacrament is not a rite or religious ceremony but the Gospel applied in outward fashion. The Sacrament of the Altar is, in essence, nothing but the Gospel, implying also comfort and



strength for the believer in this life. All three combat subjectivity and stress the objective application of grace to the individual by his participation in the sacramental meal.

Finally, when the use is considered as constitutive for the sacrament, the whole action is implied, according to Christ's institution. Hardt's argumentation centers on the institution rather than on the communion as such.

Let this suffice for the basics, where our three men stand united on the conclusions, although differing somewhat in their argumentation. The summaries of our three main sections give a broader comparison.

We will now focus on some crucial dogmatic questions raised by our study. Are there dogmatic problems unanswered or not faced by our three men?

The problems that stand out are: (a) Identification of the Incarnation-miracle with the miracle of the Real Presence; (b) Creative power of the institutional words; (c) Lack of recognizing the validity of Reformed celebration, as related to the previous principle and that of manducatio indignorum; (d) Relation of the sacramental gift to the principle of justification sola fide; (e) Proprium of the Supper.

(a) The identity of the miracle of incarnation with that of the Sacrament of the Altar, is pronounced by all three contributors. However, Hermann Sasse urges the mode of identity to be supernatural, and Leiv Aalen stresses it as an identity of predicates, rather than of matter. Hardt rejects Aalen's position, and holds to a concrete and "substantial" identity. He claims that Protestant notions of Roman materialistic Real Presence strikes even more Luther's position. This identity is, furthermore,



strengthened by the unanimity of all three men on Luther's leniency toward the transubstantiation, and their own neglect to treat this doctrine seriously as un-Scriptural heresy. Although Sasse and Aalen state this latter point, they dismiss the question as rather unimportant.

Two dogmatically relevant questions arise:

(1) Does the "identity," in Hardt's sense, detract from the fundamental significance of the incarnation by the Virgin? That is, is Christ in fact experiencing two (or more correct, an indefinite number of) incarnations, equally important to man's salvation? Although Hardt rejects any sacrificial identity or repetition as in the Roman mass, he seems to value the miracle of the Supper as of same salvatory importance as Christ's incarnation. We feel that his rigid equation of the two events detracts from the fundamental act in salvation-history when God became man, and furthermore opens up for a cultic "new-creation," which, in fact, is ecclesiastically controlled. Identity of predicates seems to be the most proper expression of the sacramental miracle.

(2) Why does Hardt refuse to take the complete step in "materialistic" direction, that the elements, in fact, have become Christ's body and blood in concrete sense? The transubstantiation is dismissed because it has no foundation in Scripture, but if the miracle is parallel to the incarnation, why not go beyond the transubstantiation and claim the change of the accidents as well? We perceive of a logical conflict between the dogmatic wish of complete "materialistic" Real Presence on the one hand, and the Scriptural maintainance of the elements, as well as the empirical contradiction of a transformation, on the other hand.



This leads to the next problem: (b) the creative power of the institutionary words. A distinction in emphasis between the three is clear. Sasse and Aalen stress that the words are aimed at the people, as the Gospel given to them, rather than at the elements to effect a change in them. Hardt seems to hold the latter, by his strong emphasis on the creative effect of the words of institution as primarily words of consecration. He is thus the only one who explicitly defends and advocates adoration and worship of the sacrament, which is the ultimate consequence of not distinguishing between the incarnation and the miracle of the Real Presence.

Furthermore, some qualifications of the creative power of the words seem to avoid embarrassing practical consequences, such as man having some magical means of imposing a new reality by the mere utterance of the words. Aalen seems to reject any sacramental notion outside the distribution and reception, while Sasse stresses the "use" as the complete action. Hardt however, approaches the problem from a different angle. The reality created by the words is qualified further neither by the action nor other words. The created reality is a resting reality. However, it is invalid if not celebrated according to the institution. Is Hardt's argumentation, in essence, different from the two others? His starting-point is determined by his incarnation-identity, but he is forced to end up with the same result as the other two. The unavoidable constitutive factor of "use," is thus treated without characterizing it as constitutive.

We may now approach the difficult aspect of non-Lutheran celebration, especially (c) the lack of recognizing the validity of Reformed



celebration, as it relates to the principle of the creative word and that of the manducatio indignorum. All three qualify the creative power of the words of institution by the office of the ministry. Unless pronounced by a properly called person, they are invalid, because they are contrary to Christ's institution. The Real Presence is thus non-existent in the Reformed celebration.

We contend that we here encounter an "office" consciousness that supercedes Biblical legitimacy. One may dispute whether the exegetical material in the New Testament explicitly limits the sacramental administration to pastors or elders. The Lutheran Confessions do limit it to properly called persons, but not from a dogmatic standpoint, rather from a standpoint of church-order, which is adiaphoral. Outward church-order is not divinely instituted. When the rite vocatus of Augustana XIV, taken in the sense of a Lutheran ordained pastor who teaches the Lutheran doctrine of the Real Presence, is made a prerequisite for the Real Presence, one is imposing church-order on Christ's words of institution, thus compromising these words.

Furthermore, we see a contradiction between the principle of manducatio indignorum and a complete rejection of Reformed celebration. Manducatio indignorum disregards faith as constitutive for the Real Presence. All three contributors, in accordance with Luther, claim that Christ is the one who speaks in the sacrament, not the officiant, whose faith is always uncertain. This implies that the spiritual condition of the officiant is not constitutive for the true sacrament. To claim that the Reformed celebration, if conducted according to Christ's institution,



does not give, under any circumstances, the Real Presence, is to deny the above principle and qualify the sacrament in a Calvinistic fashion.

There seems to be a onesided concern toward guarding against Reformed thinking in limiting the power of the words of institution. One may claim the importance of church-order, but one cannot disqualify a function conducted according to Christ's words because it differs in the respect of order. One would then have to disqualify all Reformed preaching of the Gospel as well. We cannot believe that any of our three men would do that, although Sasse seems to be the only one who explicitly opens for a recognition of an over-arching inter-confessional Christian heritage.

In stressing the importance and constitutive factor of the Real Presence for the sacrament as a means of grace, one encounters the problem of (d) the relation between this gift and the principle of justification by faith alone. All three stress the gift of the sacrament to be that of the Gospel. While also stressing faith as necessary for the reception of this gift, Hardt seems so concerned with rejecting faith as a constitutive factor for the Real Presence, that he endangers the sola fide principle itself. While we admit the lack of material from him on this point, he does not seem concerned with a too mechanistic, or "sacramentalistic," understanding.

Sasse, on the other hand, emphasizes faith to a much greater extent, as constitutive for reception of salvation, and that Luther never left his early principles on this matter. Aalen claims that the Lutheran Confessions do not address themselves adequately to the problem. He holds that the sacraments must be given full validity, and faith, therefore,



seems for him to be created by the sacramental action. This is the position also of Hardt, while Sasse stresses more the aspect of awakening and strengthening of faith, by the sacrament.

The problematic character of this relation is seen when one asks the following question: Why not use the Lord's Supper as a means of mission? None of the three would concede to such practice, but they would, then, have to make fine distinctions, such as between "saving faith" and "seeking faith," to uphold the sacrament as the absolute saving means.

We hold, with the three, that the necessary function of the sacrament can only be drawn from Christ's institution, but would add that the principle of justification by faith can never be violated. With Luther, we maintain that one Scripture-passage is to be interpreted in accordance with others. No interpretation can contradict an article of faith, including that of sola fide.

(e) The proprium of the Lord's Supper is according to the three, the outward and individual application of the message of forgiveness. Both Hardt and Aalen seem to consider it superior to the Gospel-proclamation, contending that the Supper more fully shows God's action with man, irrespective of his condition. Hardt would, in accordance with his view on the creativity of the words, hold that the words of forgiveness actually transform the recipient. Admittedly, he does not conceive of a mechanistic process, nevertheless, the objective character reduces the subjectivity of the recipient to an insignificant factor. Aalen is somewhat more cautious, however, strongly combatting all forms of subjective elements as determining the gift of the sacrament. Sasse places the Supper more in the life of the Christian, as a strengthening and upholding meal.



In his apologetic situation against modern exegesis, Aalen raises the legitimate and crucial dogmatic-historic problem: If the literal interpretation is false, the Church has been living on a fallacy ever since the days of the apostles. This questions the whole integrity of the Church. Is the Church still the Church if it denies one of the fundamental articles of faith since the beginning of the Church?

These and other problems have come to mind when studying our topic. The one-sided stress of the objective character of God's gift in the sacrament tends to neglect the personal reception in faith as a necessary element. This is obviously prompted by the fact that our three contributors stand in an apologetic situation toward crypto-Calvinism creeping into the Lutheran Church. In Hardt's case, one encounters seemingly absolute loyalty to Luther.

However much one appreciates the confessional concern of our three men, one may be inclined to express with C. F. Wisløff, in a review of Hardt's doctoral thesis, that the Lutheran Church, fortunately, is not bound by any specific Luther-interpretation, but by Scripture and the Confessions.



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